Photo *W. & A. H. Fry.*

Some bravely thump the sounding "grand,"
  While others smite the drum,
A trusty stick in either hand
  To make the music come.
'Tis not for modest me to carp
Or cavil at the sad Jew's-harp;
And yet, if I the truth confessed,
I like the penny trumpet best.

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"CHICKS."

From the Painting by A. J. Elsley.

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FROM THE STALLS

VALLI VALLI.

A Talented Young Actress.

Miss Valli Valli at once gives one the impression of being a young girl of quite exceptional mental gifts.

Though not yet quite eighteen, she has made a name in a class of play in which intelligence is an indispensable quality.

Her impersonation of the persecuted boy at the Lyceum in "Her Love Against the World" showed much artistic insight in one so young.

She is of German, English, and French extraction, and she speaks fluently in three languages, though her English is free from any trace of foreign accent.

She has no great love of motors, possibly on account of a trying experience she once had in company with Miss Queenie Leighton some twenty miles out of Manchester.

Their motor broke down hopelessly, and had it not been for the opportune arrival on the scene of another motor party they could not have reached the theatre in time.

The play could hardly have proceeded without them, for theirs were the leading parts.

Photos *S. Elwin Neal, c.*

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WANDA RADFORD.

The Latest Wonder-Child.

"You have interested me enormously. I am sure if you work hard you will have a very brilliant career."

This is what Madame Melba wrote to the little ten-year-old Australian actress, Miss Wanda Radford.

Two years ago—when she was only eight—she played for three months at the principal theatre in Vienna, and in Berlin they christened her the Wonder-child.

She recently made her first public appearance in London at the Steinway Hall, and Londoners were no less astounded than Berliners at her precocious talents.

Without the aid of "make-up" she impersonated the principal characters in "Oliver Twist"—Fagin, Nancy, and Bill Sikes; and followed with Portia, Henry V., and Shylock.

Not only by her attitudes, but by her marvellous changes of face were these characters made absolutely life-like.

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Photo *Foulsham & Banfield.*

GEORGE ROBEY and MASTER TEDDIE, HIS SON.

"As Like as Two Pirs."

George Robey, the shining light of the music-hall stage, is no less funny tricked out as Queen Elizabeth than in his recent *rôle* of Prehistoric man.

A career as a civil engineer was originally mapped out for him, and he spent five years in Germany in order to finish his education.

Apparently, singing at smoking concerts did not conduce to his passing science and art examinations, and one day, on his return to his native London, he was introduced to Kennedy, the mesmerist, at the Aquarium, who discovered in him a gold mine of talent.

"He mesmerised me and made me sing," says Mr. Robey. "Of course, I don't wish to cast any doubt on the integrity of mesmerism!"

The same week he went on at the Oxford as an "extra turn," and received a contract for twelve months on the spot.

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Photo *Foulsham & Banfield.*

LOUIE POUNDS and POWIS PINDER

In "Lady Tatters."

M'ss Louie Pounds and Mr. Powis Pinder played respectively the heroine and the irate Puritan father in "Lady Tatters" at the Shaftesbury.

It is almost impossible to credit it, but Miss Pounds herself relates how once she was actually mistaken for a gramophone. But that was only by a "little vulgar" errand boy who called at her flat when Miss Pounds was practising scales.

Mr. Powis Pinder has sung heroic baritone parts in Gilbert and Sullivan revivals, but has lately developed on new lines. The turning point was reached when he played the butcher in "Merrie England." Then Mr. Pinder was discovered to be the possessor of a certain valuable brand of dry humour.

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Photos Campbell-Gray

PETER MACLAREN and HARRY JACKSON

Champion Tree-Fellers of Australia.

Peter Maclaren and Harry Jackson are Australia's champion tree-fellers and double-handed sawmen, who have recently given an exhibition of their powers at the Hippodrome.

That their axes are as sharp as razors Maclaren demonstrated beyond dispute by removing the beard and whiskers of an individual, using plenty of lather and his axe.

They are astounding sawmen, making nothing of a log of Australian hardwood five feet in circumference. This is sawn through in just half-a-minute.

Then they set to work with axes, and the chips begin to fly! The audience goes wild while each man hacks away at his separate tree-trunk.

Maclaren seems a little the more powerful, but Jackson is wonderfully spry. In twenty minutes they are through.

It is a near thing—but Maclaren just wins. Six and a-half feet of iron-like wood chopped through in twenty minutes!

What giants Australia does produce!

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Photo Fellows Willson.

MIRIAM CLEMENTS.

The Queen of Stage Queens.

Tall and regally handsome, Miss Miriam Clements is the queen of stage queens and princesses.

Her stately carriage stood her in good stead as Princess Marie in "Resurrection," and she gave a life-like and pathetic portrayal of the young queen in "His Highness My Husband."

Miss Clements is a wonderfully strong and healthy girl. Her natural complexion is so good that she disdains the use of grease paint. Anybody who knows anything at all of stage methods must acknowledge this to be most exceptional.

As to strength, she can walk twenty-five miles a day, and keep up the pace for several days together—a feat that would give many a man furiously to think.

Once she and a girl friend encountered a madman alone on the Pyrenees. He was armed with a knife, but the ladies put on such a resolute front that the maniac incontinently fled with a baffled yell.

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Photo *Bassano.*

CONSTANCE COLLIER as CLEOPATRA.

A Majestic Beauty.

Miss Constance Collier has had a varied stage career. She comes of a theatrical family, and made her *début* as Cissie, in "The Silver King," when only eight.

For the space of six years or so she was relegated to private life. Her career proper commenced under Mr. George Edwardes' auspices when she was just fifteen. Mr. Wilson Barrett was the first to introduce her to more serious work. She understudied Miss Maud Jeffreys in "The Sign of the Cross," and subsequently played the great part of Mercia herself. Her recent triumphs in "Ulysses," "Ben Hur," and "Oliver Twist" are fresh in the minds of all.

She is a great friend of the celebrated French actor, Coquelin, and she attributes her success in no small measure to the kindly advice he has always delighted to give her.

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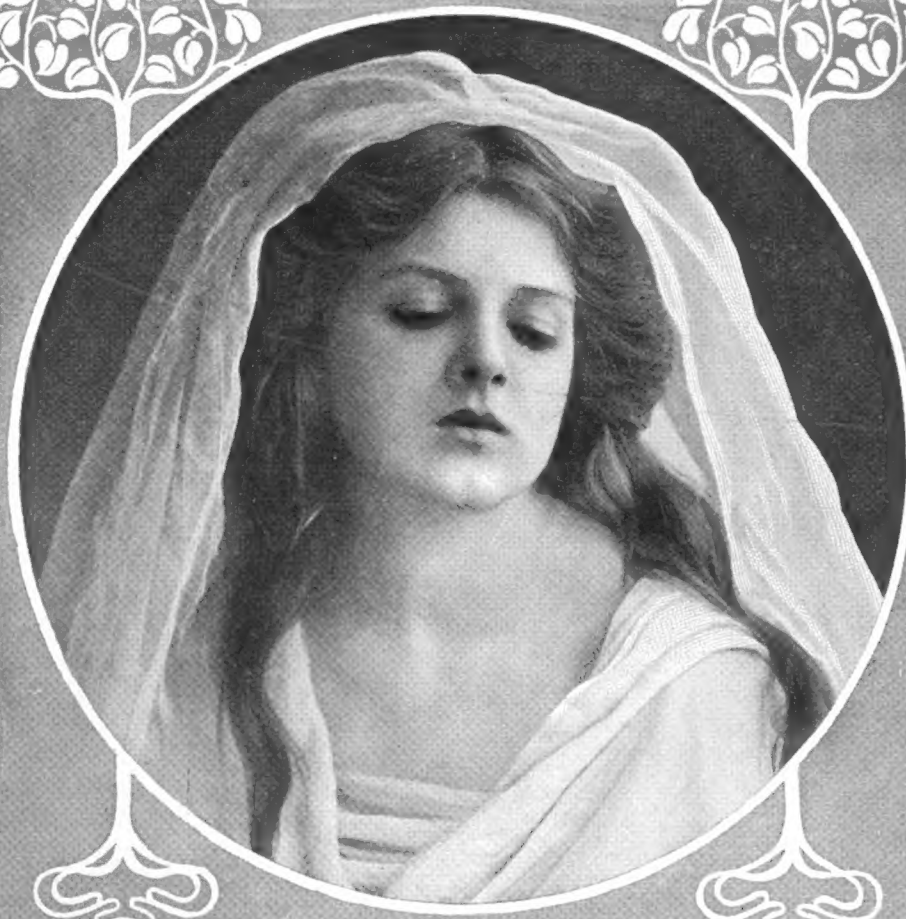

Photo *Foulsham & Banfield.*

GLADYS COOPER.

A Charming New Recruit at the Gaiety Theatre.

"Everybody's awfly good to me" is the burden of Miss Gladys Cooper's refrain.

"I was told the stage would be a very hard life," she says, "but no one could enjoy it more than I do. Everybody, from Mr. George Edwardes downwards, has been so nice. And I have been so lucky since I came on."

Nobody but a positive ogre could help being "nice" to such a dainty vision of loveliness as Miss Cooper.

Her beauty is of a very rare type. Hair like spun Australian gold and melting hazel eyes allied to a figure of uncommon symmetry for so young a girl—she is just eighteen—make a picture not easily forgotten.

She has a pretty part in "The Girls of Gottenberg," and charmed everyone in "Bluebell."

Miss Cooper likes golf, but prefers the river. She can make a very creditable display with a pair of sculls.

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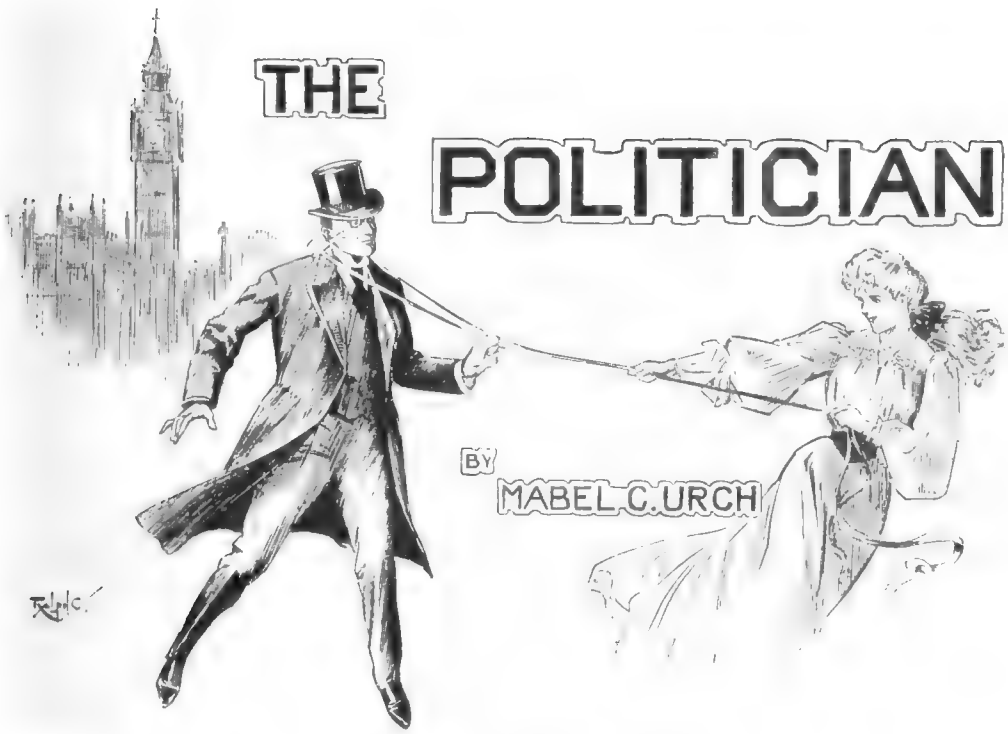

The Story of his Sentimental Conversion.

I.

It was early in March, but the little village of Daveley in Hampshire was radiant with sunshine, and the sea and sky were so blue as to suggest June. The cliffs were almost deserted, save for a few children and two people, who were walking rather aimlessly along towards each other.

One was an extremely sulky young Cabinet Minister, who was inwardly bemoaning the fact that, a few days before, his most cherished scheme and his voice had collapsed together, and his doctor had insisted on a complete rest for a week or two; the other was a blue-eyed girl of about seventeen, who looked supremely contented with life and her surroundings, as she wandered hatless in the sunshine. She had an open book in her hand, which she was reading with much absorption; on the soft, dry turf her footsteps were almost noiseless.

The Cabinet Minister drew nearer, his eyes on the ground, his brain busy with schemes which would eventually, he hoped, bring confusion to the ranks of his opponents —a moment later there was a violent collision, the girl's book flying out of her hand, and landing on the grass at some little distance away.

"I—I beg your pardon!" gasped Mornington Leigh. "I hope I didn't hurt you."

"Not a bit, thank you; but I'm afraid my book must have given you a rather hard knock. It's—very heavy."

He walked to the place where it had fallen and picked it up. It was the biography of an eminent politician of the day, whom Mornington Leigh knew well.

"Very heavy, I should think," Mornington said emphatically. "I wonder you were so absorbed in it."

"It wasn't a political part," remarked the girl, smiling slightly. "I'd just found a rather interesting story about his Oxford days. I don't think I should have been absorbed in politics—I hate them—don't you?"

"Loathe them very often," replied Mornington; "but if you dislike them so much, why read books which must contain a good deal to do with them?"

"I promised to. I shall have to know a great deal of politics later on, you see—when I go home."

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"You don't live here, then?" Mornington asked.

"Oh, dear, no! I wish I did. I'm only here for a last holiday with a dear old nurse of mine, before I—quite grow up, and I was only allowed to come on condition that I would read political history of some kind every day."

"Good gracious!" ejaculated Mornington. He still held the heavy book, and was gazing rather curiously from it to the pretty child at his side.

"Well, you see, I shall have to help entertain a politician when I get home."

"I don't think he'll want you to talk politics to him!" said Mornington, smiling involuntarily.

"That was what I said, but mother declared he must not think me a little dunce, so here I am with stacks of political histories! I don't think I really know much more than I did when I came, and I've been here a week."

"Do you read political history all day?" asked Mornington.

"No, in the afternoons I—I dig!"

"*Dig!*" He stared at her in astonishment. "Oh, in the garden, you mean?"

"No, I don't. I dig down on the sands. Yes, it's most dreadfully babyish, I know, but it's the last chance I shall ever have, and nurse has some sweet little grandchildren who simply love it! So do I," she added honestly.

"I wish I could dig, too," said Mornington Leigh, who had never been known to indulge in unnecessary bodily exercise in his life.

"Well, we shall be digging this afternoon down in that little sheltered part there. The tide's just right. Are you staying here?"

"Yes, the doctor sent me for a rest."

"I'm sorry you're ill; you look horribly tired. Would digging do you good? Oh, there's nurse waving from the window for me to go in to lunch; I must run. Where's my book? Thank you so much. Good-bye."

"*Au revoir!*" corrected Mornington Leigh. "I'm coming to help dig!" And he walked back to his solitary lunch at the almost empty hotel without once thinking of his wrecked scheme.

* * * * *

"How's the political history getting on?" asked Mornington Leigh.

It was a sunny afternoon about a week later, and he was sitting in a deep moat which lay round the gigantic sand-castle he had been energetically helping to build. Three noisy, happy children were running races on the sand, while they waited for the sea to come and sweep away their work, and the girl he had collided with on the cliff was putting some last touches to the decorations of the castle, with its Union Jack bravely flying in the wind.

She looked younger than ever in a simple dark blue jersey and serge skirt, her fair hair blown about her shoulders by the gentle breeze. At Mornington's question she left her work and came and sat down beside him.

"It isn't getting on at all," she answered mournfully, "and I shall have to go home in a very little time. To this minute I don't know whether Home Rule would have ruined the Empire, or saved it, and as to the Education Question——"

"I'm sure the politician, whoever he is, won't know anything about that himself," interrupted Mornington, "and he certainly won't want to talk about it."

"I don't even know the politician's name—horrible old man!—I wish I never need!" said the girl with sudden vehemence. "I wish I could go back to school again, or else stay quietly at home with daddy; but mother says I must marry."

"Marry!" repeated Mornington. "Marry?"

"Yes; I've said it now. I didn't mean to, but you're a very understanding person, and you don't even know my name, so it doesn't matter. Yes, I'm to marry the politician, that is, if he'll be kind enough to marry me. He's very rich, and they want influence for my brother, who's going into politics; and the politician's aunt wants him to marry, and she and my mother are great friends, so it's a mutual benefit affair all round, you see!"

"Good Heavens!" said Mornington.

"It's rather horrible, isn't it? But I wouldn't marry him even if he asked me, except for my father's sake. You see, my father and I have always been—well, chums, and mother says that if we don't get money somehow soon, we shall have to leave our old home, and that—that would kill him. He doesn't know about the politician, only he's a friend of his; and when mother said she would like him to come and see us, my father was delighted, and promised to ask him."

For a moment Mornington Leigh was silent; then he said slowly: "We only have a few more days like this. Won't you tell me your name before we say 'good-bye,' and let me tell you mine?"

"Yes, the day before we have to say 'good-bye,'" replied the girl gravely; then suddenly springing up, she exclaimed: "Oh, the tide

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"How's the political history getting on?" asked Mornington Leigh.

will soon be in! Come along, children, let's hold our castle as long as we can."

She held out her hand to the three merry youngsters, and, spade in hand, climbed on to the broad, flat top of the sand-castle, her troubles all forgotten as she stood among her little comrades, gleefully watching the sea creep nearer and nearer to their stronghold. Mornington carried that picture of her in his mind as he walked slowly back to his hotel about half-an-hour later, feeling curiously troubled and disturbed.

He was by no means a sentimental person; in fact, in the House of Commons, in spite of his youth and his good looks, he was always regarded as a confirmed bachelor, and Lad frequently railed at married politicians, asserting that they were bound, sooner or later, to neglect either their work or their wives. But the thought of that happy, fearless child's going so innocently into a loveless marriage, had come to him with a shock almost of horror, and he could not drive it from his mind.

However, at the hotel he found a telegram which effectually banished such thoughts. It was from the colleague who had been helping him with the rejected measure, and contained an urgent summons to London. Mornington hurriedly packed his bag, and just managed to catch the next train—the last to London that day, the railway service from Daveley leaving much to be desired.

Late that night he and his friend, Radley Marriot, sat discussing the crisis which had so unexpectedly arisen, and called for his presence at the scene of action.

"I was very sorry to fetch you back from your holiday," Marriot remarked, when at length he stood up to go; "but you look a different being even after such a short rest. That must be an uncommonly healthy little place. Wasn't it frightfully dull, though, just now?"

"Not a bit," replied Mornington Leigh smiling; "I found some very delightful—children down there, and we built sand-castles nearly every day."

Marriot stared at him.

"Then you must either have been utterly transformed by the worry about the Bill, or else you had some very excellent reason which has not transpired," said he, as he picked up his papers and departed.

On the steps he stood still a moment ruminating.

"Mornington Leigh building sand-castles

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with children," he murmured thoughtfully; "in the name of all that's odd, why?"

Then a theory dawned on him, but only to be at once rejected.

"If it had been anyone else, I should have asked the age of the eldest child; but Mornington's above such things. Well, I give it up!" and he walked home still puzzled.

II.

"I am so sorry mother hasn't come in yet, but she won't be more than a few minutes I'm sure; she had to go—why, it's you!"

"And it's you!"

Mornington Leigh crossed the drawing-room at Ayrton Hall with a rapid step, and held out his hands to the fair-haired, graceful young lady whose conventional apologies for her mother's absence had come to so abrupt a termination.

"Then you are——"

"I am Denise Carey. And you?"

"Mornington Leigh."

"Oh! then you are a politician yourself?" She freed her hands, which he had been holding, and looked at him with some dismay in her eyes.

"Yes. Do you mind much? I'm not—*the* politician."

He smiled at her half questioningly, and she answered in the childish, impulsive way which had fascinated him at Daveley: "It's too dreadful; he's coming to-day."

"Is he really? What's his name?"

"I don't know."

"My dear child!"

"No, I don't. I only came home from Daveley last night, and when mother began to talk about him, I—I——"

"Well?" Mornington asked very gently.

"I stormed, and said I wouldn't marry him, and didn't want to hear anything about him, and mother was so annoyed she has scarcely spoken to me since."

"Don't you know even his aunt's name—your mother's friend?"

Denise shook her head. "I was at school abroad, you know, up to the time I met you at Daveley. I had only just come home. And mother never talks to me about her friends."

"Oh, well, never mind! He's not here yet and I am—luckily for me! But you're quite grown up." He glanced admiringly, though half regretfully, at her charming dress and prettily-arranged hair.

"I'm not, really! It's only outside! Why did you go away from Daveley so suddenly?"

"I had a most urgent te'egram from London, and I was obliged to go at once. I was so annoyed, but it was political work, so I couldn't help it. Oh, don't let's talk about it; tell me how many more castles you built, and what you did for the rest of your holiday?"

"Nothing very exciting, though I thoroughly enjoyed it," said Denise. "Oh, they gave me a most delightful puppy to bring home with me. Should you like to see it?"

"I should love to," replied Mornington eagerly. His hostess would scarcely follow him to the puppy's abode, and he would be able to keep Denise to himself a little longer.

They walked out into the mild April air.

"Shan't you catch cold?" asked Mornington of his companion, whose uncovered fair hair was already losing its neat appearance in the breeze. She shook her head.

"I never wear a hat if I can help it," she answered.

The puppy was visited, and at Mornington's suggestion they started to take him for a walk. They wandered in the lanes for some little time, then turned into a small wood to hunt for primroses, a proceeding which unluckily excited the puppy to such an extent that he slipped away from Denise and scrambled through the hedge into a neighbouring field.

Here he found great and unexpected opportunities for sport in the shape of chasing some respectable and highly nervous old hens, who had been clucking contentedly near a fowl-house. Denise, hearing a sudden commotion, and a joyful barking, peered through the hedge in alarm, and uttered an exclamation of horrified dismay.

"Oh, the dreadful little beast!" she cried, her consternation irresistibly communicating itself to her companion. "Look, Mr. Leigh, if you can hold up those brambles I think I can get through and catch him. Thank you."

She scrambled through the hedge, followed by the no less concerned Cabinet Minister, who tore his hands, and his immaculate coat, considerably in the process. A few minutes later they crawled back, Denise carrying a well-whipped and extremely disconsolate puppy in her arms.

"You wicked, wicked little dog!" she said breathlessly. "It makes the farmer so angry, and one of those hens looked nearly dead! Are they all alive, Mr. Leigh?"

"Yes," said Mornington peering through the hedge, "I think they're all right; but

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there's the farmer or someone coming through the gate at the far end of the field."

"Then we'd better get a bit farther off," said Denise. "He's fearfully cross, and not long ago he made a dreadful fuss because another dog of mine got in among his fowls. You see this is our wood, but, unluckily, his fields join on. Do you mind getting through another hedge?"

"Not a bit," said Mornington recklessly, and followed her on his hands and knees through a gap which led into the road.

"If we had gone round by the gate he would have seen us," Denise explained. "I've escaped that way before."

Mornington recklessly . . . followed her on his hands and knees through a gap which led into the road.

They discussed various scrapes of their childhood all the way home, Denise's being far more thrilling and varied in character than Mornington's, and they were still laughing over their reminiscences as they entered the drive gates. But when the front door came in sight, Denise became suddenly serious. A waggonette and a dog-cart were drawn up in front of it, and various people were descending from the two vehicles, while on the door-step stood a tall, commanding-looking lady in a riding-habit, obviously receiving her guests.

"They've all just arrived from the station," gasped Denise, "and—oh, what a mess we are in!"

"Who cares?" said Mornington valiantly, but realising the truth of her words, for his collar was crumpled, his coat torn, and his long, white hands covered with scratches. His companion's plight was even worse, for she had torn her skirt badly at the hem, and her fair hair showed signs of rapidly descending; also the puppy had made terrible havoc of the dainty lace on her blouse.

"Let's run away," she said, but the lady in the riding-habit had seen them, and beckoned to them with her whip, so they obediently walked up to the smiling and amused group who nearly all knew Mornington, and thoroughly enjoyed his plight, though they were considerably bewildered by it. Denise's father came quickly forward and greeted them both heartily, apologising to Mornington for his own and his wife's absence on his arrival, adding with a smile that Denise seemed to have been doing her best to amuse him. Then Mrs. Carey came to be introduced to her husband's friend, and to Denise's surprise merely alluded to her untidy state with a playful, "Naughty child!"

After more introductions and explanations, the whole party went indoors, and Denise and Mornington found themselves side by side in the hall.

"Do you think *he*—the politician—was there?" whispered Denise.

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Mornington shook his head. "He must be coming later," he answered. "I know what all those people do—there's not a politician among them."

"That's why mother wasn't cross, then," said Denise in a tone of relief. "Well, I must go and change my dress. I suppose *he* will be there at dinner! Oh, I am sorry about your coat—and your poor hands."

"Yours are just as bad," he answered smiling. "Don't be sorry! I don't know when I've enjoyed anything more than our walk—except, perhaps, our castle-building."

"You're so jolly to do things with," said Denise frankly, and then added wistfully:

"I—I wish *he* wasn't coming."

"So do I," said Mornington heartily, as she disappeared up the stairs, her golden hair now utterly escaped from its bonds and hanging round her shoulders like a veil.

* * * * *

Mornington played bridge after dinner that evening, and Denise disappeared to the billiard-room with her father and some other members of the party. But about eleven o'clock, as Mornington crossed the hall to go to the smoking-room for a final cigar, she came noiselessly through the door which shut off the back premises, her white dress carefully gathered up in one hand, her hair a little ruffled.

"I've been to say good-night to the puppy," she said softly. "I did beat him rather hard, you know."

Mornington laughed. "Shall we take him out to-morrow?" he asked.

"Oh, yes, if you're not afraid of the farmer or the scratches." She paused a moment, then said in a whisper: "*He* hasn't come."

"Perhaps he won't come at all," said Mornington hopefully, as she held out her hand to say good-night. "Remember we take the puppy out to-morrow! Good-night, Miss Carey."

"Good-night, Mr. Leigh," she answered demurely, and left him.

III.

"The question is," said Mornington Leigh slowly, "isn't one politician as good as another?"

"What on earth do you mean?" asked Denise.

They were walking very slowly along a sunny lane one morning about three days later, again accompanied by the puppy, and Denise turned and stared in bewilderment at Mornington as he made this remark after a long silence.

"Come and sit here," he said suddenly, standing still by a low stile. "I want to talk to you seriously."

"Can't you do it when we're walking along?" asked Denise; but she climbed on to the stile and sat down on the topmost bar.

"As I said, the question is—isn't one politician as good as another?" he repeated thoughtfully. "You say your mother wants you to marry this gentleman, who hasn't turned up yet, for various family and financial reasons?"

"And to please his aunt," said Denise.

"Well, we'll leave her out. Barring the aunt, as far as your mother is concerned, any fairly respectable politician, who was moderately well off, and would do what she requires for your brother, and so on, would serve! Is that true?"

"Yes," Denise replied reluctantly, "I suppose it is, but I was going to tell you—I've been thinking a great deal, and I've made up my mind definitely not to marry him. I'm sure daddy would hate me to do it even if it would save the Hall, and I don't love this man—how can I when I've never seen him? And I'm not going to try to just for the sake of his money!"

"But suppose you learnt to love him for himself—what then?" asked Mornington.

"Oh, then that would be different. If I loved him, and he really cared about me——"

"Well, Denise—Denise, dear, here is a politician and a man who cares for you with all his heart! Never mind about your mother or anything else. My dear, my dear, I do love you so!"

"You!" Denise said slowly, and flushing crimson—"I never thought that you——"

"That I loved you? Ah, but I do, Denise. Will you marry me, darling? Can you love me?"

She nodded very gravely. "I will marry you—just because I do love you!" she whispered; then, as his arms drew her closely to him, she added: "That's why I knew I couldn't marry—*the* politician."

* * * * *

"Well, my dear fellow, you couldn't have told me anything that would delight me more! I shall hate parting with the child, but I'd rather she went to you than to any other man I know; and her mother feels just the same. In fact, she told me this morning that she had been hoping for this."

"Did she?" said Mornington Leigh quietly—"did she really?"

"Yes, she did, indeed; so she'll be

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delighted. Now you want to find the little girl, I'm sure, and I'm due at a meeting. See you later on." And Mr. Carey went off whistling, though so far he had only thought of his Denise's happiness, and had not realised the effect such a marriage would have on his own affairs.

Mornington sat still for a few minutes in the sunny window-seat of the library, where his host had left him. Then he rose to his feet, and went slowly across the hall to the stairs. His face was full of a mixture of amusement and annoyance—on the bottom step he paused, with his hand on the banisters.

"Did she? Did she really?" he repeated softly.

* * * * *

"Then, mother, you don't mind?"

"Mind, my darling child! I'm positively delighted. It was the one thing I was hoping for."

"But, mother," Denise faltered and coloured scarlet, "*the* politician—the one you made me read history for——"

Mrs. Carey gazed at her daughter for a moment in bewilderment, then she laughed aloud.

"Why, you little goose, it was Mornington Leigh himself! Did you think it was someone else? And in that case do you think I should have let you wander about all day with Mornington Leigh?"

"But—but I thought he was fat and—old," said Denise.

"Well, dear, that must have been your own idea, for you never asked me, did you? and you were such a silly child I couldn't talk to you about it. But you've been very good now, and I'm quite delighted. Run away, and find Mornington, dear; I shall see him at lunch, but I must talk to Milton now about my new dress; they've put the sleeves in quite wrong!"

* * * * *

Denise and Mornington met half-way up the stairs. She was very white, and her eyes were wide with misery.

"My dearest," Mornington exclaimed, "what has happened to you? Was your mother angry?"

He would have drawn her into his arms, but she resisted him, and stood clinging to the banisters.

"No—she wasn't angry," she replied slowly. "She—was—very glad."

Mornington frowned suddenly—obviously he and Denise had been told the same thing. With a little, tender laugh he took the girl's cold hand in his own, and she looked up in surprise; then, as he put his arm round her, she resisted no longer, but leant against him, hiding her face on his shoulder.

"Mornington—Mornington, I didn't know," she sobbed, "indeed — indeed, I didn't know."

"My dearest—my dearest one, of course you didn't know; but what does it matter? Why, my darling, you're not going to take it like this? Don't you see what a joke it all is? Your mother's making you read politics to be ready to talk to me, and you and I all the time trying to forget the dull things at Daveley, and building sand-castles instead of discussing affairs of state? And then, not having the least expectation of finding you, my accepting your father's invitation for a few days in the country. It was only something he said about your mother just now which made me realise that I was *the* politician myself. And we have fallen in love with each other, and got engaged of our own free will, and not because of anyone's plotting and scheming. Ah, Denise, my little one, you must see what a really excellent joke it all is."

There was a pause, and he waited anxiously. Then slowly the fair head was lifted from his shoulder, and the blue eyes met his with a faint smile dawning in them through a mist of tears. The next moment the clear, sweet laugh he loved rang out, and Denise said, rather tremulously:

"Yes, Mornington, it's a joke—it's an excellent joke. And, Mornington, do you know we forgot the puppy, and left him in the lane, and he's probably killed all someone's fowls by now——"

"Which won't be a joke at all," said Mornington, as he ran after her down the stairs.

Mrs. Carey, looking out of her bedroom window, saw them disappearing down the drive together, hand-in-hand, and both hatless. She smiled, oh, so peacefully.

"I don't think he'll want her to talk politics just yet, after all," she said contentedly, and returned to the problem of the sleeves.

* * * * *

"Mornington Leigh married! Well, that really does sound odd. Where have they gone for their honeymoon?"

"Nobody knows. The papers pretended to have found out, but I believe it was all a fraud. Leigh declared he hadn't told anyone except his bride, and nobody knew at the wedding. Well, good-bye! I go this way."

Radley Marriot nodded to his friend, and

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walked on alone down Piccadilly towards his club in the brilliant August sunshine.

He had just returned rather suddenly from a sojourn of several months' duration in Canada, and the first news which had reached him on his arrival in England had been that of the wedding of his friend and colleague, Mornington Leigh, whose violent prejudice against married politicians seemed to have undergone an unexpected modification.

Marriot stayed a few hours in London, found it extremely dull and intolerably hot, and that evening took his departure to Ridmouth, in Hampshire, in search of golf and fresh air.

He found both, and in a few days became so invigorated that he wandered along the cliffs one evening as far as the little village of Daveley, and, being much struck with the beauty of the peaceful, sheltered place, found a comfortable nook on the cliff side, and sat down to rest.

After a time he heard voices, and peering round the thick gorse bush, behind which he had established himself, saw three small children paddling at the edge of the rippling waves, while nearer the cliff were two people engaged in finishing an enormous sand-castle. One was a man, clad in immaculate white flannels; the other, a fair-haired girl, dressed in pale blue.

"That's the best we can do," said the man, throwing his spade on the sand, and sitting down beside it; and at the sound of that voice Marriot sat up, and poked his head a little farther round the bush.

Yes, there was no doubt about it—the lazy, musical tones, the slight figure, the eyeglass dangling on its slender black cord. Marriot gasped, and ejaculated softly:

"Mornington Leigh!"

"You're only too glad of an excuse to sit down," replied the other labourer. "Oh, Mornington, *do* you remember the first castle we built when you—when we first knew each other in March?"

"Do I not?" said Mornington. "Come and sit down, Denise."

"You're making me lazy, too," she answered, as she obeyed his request. "And I do want to help you in your real work, Mornington," she added wistfully.

"So you shall, dearest, and I shall get on all the better for having you," replied Mornington; "but I don't believe in working on a honeymoon."

"We never talk a word of politics from morning till night," Denise remarked thoughtfully.

Her companion gave one quick glance round. The children were absorbed in the discovery of an infinitesimal crab. Marriot was safely concealed behind the friendly gorse bush, through which he was still peering curiously at his whilom bachelor friend.

Mornington Leigh drew his bride a little nearer to him, with a soft laugh of contented happiness, and—"Politics be hanged!" said he, and bent his head and kissed her.

* * * * *

A moment later Radley Marriot got up, and walked quickly back along the cliffs, the way he had come. Once he paused, and stood for a moment, staring at the restless blue waters before him.

"It seems I might reasonably have demanded the age of the eldest child he built sand-castles with, after all," he murmured.

He went away from Ridmouth the next day. Mornington and his bride might walk there some day, and see him; and "It would be a pity to disturb them," he said thoughtfully to himself, as the train bore him rapidly back to London.

At the club he found the friend who had told him about Mornington's marriage, idly scanning the pages of a daily journal.

"So the reporters tracked the Leighs after all," he said smiling, as soon as they had exchanged greetings. "It would be easier to escape from detectives."

"Where have they been seen?" asked Marriot, with a keen feeling of regret for the interrupted idyll.

"Oh, in Spain; and they say here that Mornington is making a study of the Spanish political institutions. Good old Mornington! He can't even leave politics alone on his honeymoon."

"No," said Marriot slowly; "it's odd, isn't it? Well—good old Mornington!"

His friend moved away, leaving him alone with the paper. He drew it towards him, and read the paragraph about Mornington Leigh and his honeymoon through twice. In his mind was a memory of the little scene at Daveley with the two happy-faced people sitting by the big sand-castle in the sunshine.

"Good old Mornington!" he murmured. Then, with a sudden irrepressible chuckle, as he glanced at the statements in the newspaper: '*Politics be hanged!*'"

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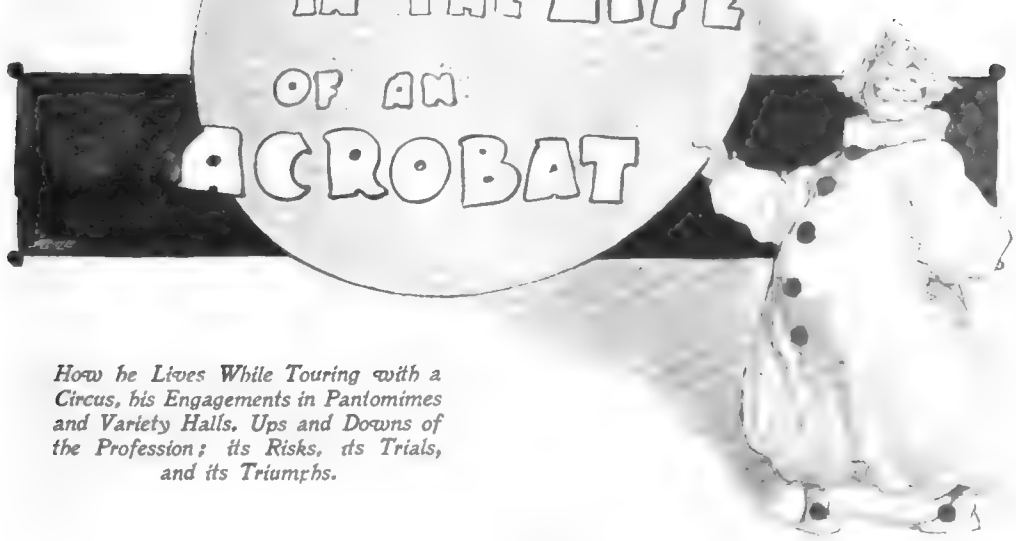
A DAY IN THE LIFE OF AN ACROBAT



How he Lives While Touring with a Circus, his Engagements in Pantomimes and Variety Halls. Ups and Downs of the Profession; its Risks, its Trials, and its Triumphs.

By "Tights."

My daily life as an acrobatic performer is one of hard work, and, when you have heard my story, I think you will agree that the members of the "tumbling" profession are by no means idle people. In these days most acrobats work in the variety halls of England, America, and the Continent, and their lives are somewhat easier than they were when I made my first somersault in the ring of a travelling circus.

During a tenting tour with one of the big equestrian shows in this country or in the United States, there are very few hours of leisure for the artist. I have been on the road in America with John O'Brien's, Forepaugh's, and Barnum's circuses, and I have had to hustle through several seasons of constant roving from one town to another.

Suppose that I am "running a slang"—that is performing an act, as I am at present, with a partner—and that we are booked for a tour with a circus. We start on our travels early in the spring, giving two shows a day in every town on our route, one performance in the afternoon and the other in the evening. If the combination with which I am booked provides its living vans and travelling kitchens, the performer is never away from the smell of the sawdust from one week's end to another.

I have been engaged in shows that offer sleeping accommodation to the artists, and in those that arrange for the performers to travel from town to town by rail, and of the two I prefer the first kind of establishment. Of course, the journey from one pitch to the next is quicker by rail than by road in the slow-moving vans; but, on the whole, the company get more rest when there is no necessity for catching trains and no waiting about at railway stations.

Our show reaches a town somewhere about nine or ten in the morning, after a journey along the dark roads. About this hour we acrobats turn out of bed, and, while the huge canvas hippodrome is being erected by the army of tent men, we eat our breakfasts. In fine weather this outdoor life is rather enjoyable; but when the ground is sodden by rain, and terrific winds search through the arena

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The hand-spring is the A B C of acrobatism. It consists in a run, a bound on to the outspread hands, and a revolution of the body in the air.

and the dressing tent, and threaten to hurl down the circus, it is full of discomfort to the performer. But we are, as a rule, happy-go-lucky folk, and pretty well used to taking the rough with the smooth.

If we are rehearsing a new feat, my partner and I, scantily clad in clothes used for practising, go into the ring for an hour or so during the morning, and try to shape this fresh trick. Most acrobats are bound as apprentices to a troupe, and these lads are kept by the "boss," who also pays them a small salary.

The morning is the only time when the boys can practise in private, and you will see the beginner attempting to master the hand-spring, while other novices, who have advanced a step or two in their profession, are practising somersaults, vaulting from the spring-board, or flying from bar to bar of the lofty trapezes.

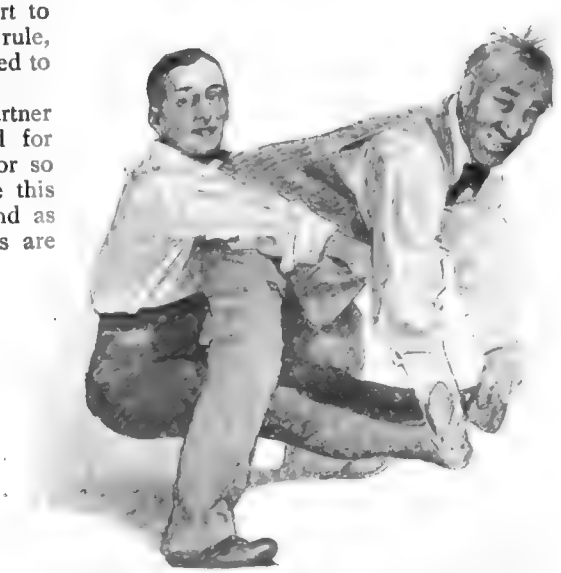
The hand-spring is the A B C of acrobatism. It consists in a run, a bound on to the outspread hands, and a revolution of the body in the air. This feat is soon learnt by a clever boy, but it needs considerable skill before you can alight gracefully and steadily on the feet after a series of violent hand-springs across the arena.

Having learnt a neat hand-spring, the ground tumbler proceeds to acquire the art of the somersault, in which no use of the hands is permitted. The somersault is a more difficult piece of business than the hand-spring. It needs more nerve and much greater agility, and the beginner is usually afraid that he will pitch on his head instead of upon his feet.

But the somersault has to be mastered. It is a stock trick of almost every performer in a circus, from the clown to the equestrian artist. The conventional way of taking a call from the spectators in a circus is to turn several somersaults.

At midday it is time to dress for the parade through the chief streets of the city. Then, after returning from the procession, there is just time to eat a snack and to get ready for the call to the ring. If your line is that of the eccentric acrobat, you must make up your face with grease paint, and perhaps put on a pair of comic whiskers and a wig.

Griffin, of Griffin and Dubois, was the first performer to introduce "the tramp acrobat." This artist makes up as a comic "moucher," and his business has been imitated



In comic acts "double cart-wheels" are often introduced, in which two men lock legs and arms in a complicated manner.

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by many others in various lines of acrobatism, contortionism, trick cycling, and juggling.

If your "business" is a gymnastic or acrobatic act, exhibiting strength and daring rather than boisterous clowning, you don white or pink tights and light shoes, and await your turn in the ring.

Your entrance into the arena should be bounding and nimble, and you must go through your show as though you thoroughly enjoy it, and have no regard for your bones.

The young performer, and even some of the veterans, would rather perform without the "band clatter." Circus bands are usually brassy, and the blare of the instruments and the clash of the cymbals are unnerving to the new artist, especially at those moments when he is performing one of his most intricate feats. For this reason, and also to impress the spectators, the orchestra is silent during the minutes when the acrobat's attention is at high strain, but as soon as he has finished the dangerous trick the music is resumed with a crash and a bang. Of course, we like applause; all artists do, for there is nothing so depressing as a performance before a cold audience. We work best when we are appreciated.

The head balance is extremely difficult and risky. One artist stands firmly, with his legs somewhat apart, whilst his partner balances himself head downwards upon the under man's head. In comic acts "double cart-wheels" are often introduced, in which two men lock legs and arms in a complicated manner, and roll over and over on the stage.

Ground acrobats, as distinguished from trapeze and aerial performers, have a large variety of "slangs," and each artist endeavours to invent something original. My partner can balance me on the palm of his hand while I stand on my head with my legs outspread in the air. This is a feat requiring strength, nerve, and judgment in balancing.

"Knockabout" artists rely more upon violent tumbles, quaint postures, and beating one another than upon feats of strength; but there are performers who combine the comic and gymnastic lines, and these are often in demand for pantomimes.

Talking of "knockabouts" reminds me of an incident that occurred when I was playing a part in a pantomime at Sheffield. In one scene I had to chastise several unruly servants out of an oriental palace, and I endeavoured to perform this "comic business" as realistically as possible. The servants were played by "supers," and one of these was a big fellow who had a reputation as a boxer.

My partner can balance me on the palm of his hand while I stand on my head with my legs outspread in the air.

In driving out the "supers," I struck this one fairly hard over the head with my "toffee-stick" or "whacker," which was a tube of painted canvas, stuffed loosely with sawdust to resemble a stick.

When I hit him he uttered a very real

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exclamation, which was not in the book of words, and ran off with his hand to his head. At my exit he was waiting for me in the wings, vowing that he would punish me, and, as he squared up to me in a pugilistic attitude, I asked for an explanation.

"Do you know that you've nearly cracked my skull?" he roared.

"Impossible!" I said, "the toffee-stick only contains sawdust." With these words I examined the whacker, and to my dismay found that the end had been opened, and a small, hard wooden ball inserted.

I assured the man that I was incapable of playing such tricks upon him, and he believed me, saying that he suspected one of the supers. After the show there was a great scene between this big super and one of the comic servants, whom he accused of inserting the ball in the toffee-stick, and I believe that the affair ended in a fight. I never learnt why this trick had been played upon "big George"; but I never went on the stage again without carefully examining my toffee-stick.

It is fair to say that acrobats are abstemious, and I know several in the profession who never touch strong drink. An immoderate use of alcoholic liquors quite unfits the acrobat for his work in the ring or on the stage. His eye must be clear and steady, his nerves sound, and his muscles hard, or he will soon deteriorate, and his performance will suffer.

A few years ago almost every artist in a circus company was expected to take part in the "Great Vaulting Act." Vaulting in a gymnasium means leaping over the vaulting horse, with the use of the hands. In a circus vaulting consists in running along a plank, jumping on a spring-board, and making one or two somersaults over the backs of several horses, finally alighting on the ground.

When this act was first introduced, some of the bolder performers used to vault over a squad of men dressed as soldiers, holding guns and fixed bayonets. This was a showy vault, but it was not more dangerous than the double somersault over a number of horses.

A groom in an American circus, with which I was travelling one summer, made a bet with a friend that he would vault over ten horses at a rehearsal of the vaulting act. The artists tried to dissuade him from the attempt, but the man dodged them on the spring-board, ran along, turned a feeble somersault and alighted among the horses. His fall was fortunately broken by the backs of the horses, but he was considerably shaken, and he caused a stampede of the horses to the stables.

I shall not forget the rating that this amateur acrobat received from the proprietor of the show. "It isn't your stupid head I care about," roared the boss, "but my horses' backs!"

The aerial somersaults of trapeze artists are very graceful and daring. Some of these performers can swing from the flying trapeze, revolve in the air, and catch the bar of a second trapeze. Niblo, one of the most famous trapezists, was the first to perform the double revolution between the trapeze bars. His feat was, however, excelled by a woman acrobat, the well-known Lulu, who was able to turn three somersaults in mid-air.

Another perilous trick on the trapeze, which I have seen performed by several of my friends, is the "leg catch." In this feat one artist hangs by the arms from the bar, and the other, after a powerful swing, flies through the air, and catches his partner by the legs, when both swing together. The performance usually ends with a single or double somersault into the net.

Many years ago an acrobat named Risley invented the performance that now bears his name. The Risley act is given by several troupes, and it is a performance in which the Ergottis and King Luis excel. King Luis, a native of the West Indies, is a Hercules in physique. Supporting himself on his hands and feet, he bears the Risley cushion on his chest, while one of the Ergottis, lying on his back on the pad, revolves a beam with his feet. At each end of the beam is a boat, and in each boat an apprentice. The Ergotti troupe also perform some startling Risley tricks with a ladder.

The decline in the popularity of the circus in England has made fresh conditions for the acrobat. At one time London boasted of three permanent equestrian houses—Astley's, Hengler's, and the Holborn Amphitheatre. To-day Hengler's Circus is only opened occasionally, and the Hippodrome does not rely entirely upon equestrian and acrobatic performances to fill its bill.

The old-fashioned circus proprietor is dying out. Yet formerly Price, an Englishman, ran a successful permanent circus in Madrid, and English circus artists were engaged in every equestrian show on the Continent. To-day the acrobat has to depend chiefly upon the variety halls that have sprung up in all parts of the kingdom.

During my professional tours on the Continent, I have met with some curious adventures. I was once detained for several days on the Russian frontier, under the suspicion

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of being an emissary of the Nihilists, and my trunks were searched for bombs. A telegram from the proprietor of a circus in St. Petersburg proved my identity to the over-zealous officials.

In Spain, while travelling from Madrid to Irun, by a night express, I was accompanied by a troupe of gipsy dancers, who were on their way to Bordeaux. Among them was a very beautiful Gitana, named Jola, with whom two of the men were in love. I must say that the girl rather enjoyed the situation, and liked to watch the effect of the jealousy which she had aroused in these swarthy, hot-tempered admirers. But she was terribly frightened when the rivals stood up in the compartment, drew their long-bladed "navajas," or knives, and prepared for a duel. Amid the shrieks of the girl, and the supplication of an old gipsy woman, the two men began the combat.

I was once detained for several days on the Russian frontier, under the suspicion of being an emissary of the Nihilists, and my trunks were searched for bombs.

Eyeing one another like tigers about to spring, they made two or three thrusts, which they parried with their left arms in a wonderful manner. Then they closed, and I feared a fatal termination to the fight, for the opponents were furious. But the shouts and screams were heard by the occupants of the next carriage, who contrived to arouse two Civil Guards who were travelling in the train.

The engine came to a standstill, the guards entered our compartment, separated the combatants, and remained with them until we reached Irun. One of the gipsies had received a severe wound on the left wrist.

In my early days, while on tour with a small circus in the Western States, our only elephant became refractory one night, and after knocking down his trainer with his trunk, bolted through the audience, ripped down the canvas side of the circus, and ran amuck in the little town.

After smashing a store front and knocking down a street lamp, he took to water, and stood in the middle of a stream with only his head showing. We were all night trying to coax or drive him ashore; but he sulked and wouldn't budge until hunger induced him to follow the hay which we threw into the river. As the hay floated into shallow water he followed it, and at length came on to the bank, ate a good breakfast, and then quietly accompanied his trainer to the circus.

One night, as I was coming out of the stage door of a Liverpool music-hall, a street urchin came shyly up and said: "Please, mister, I'd like to go on the stage as an acrobat." He was a smart little chap, and somehow I took a fancy to him on the spot.

As he appeared hungry, I went to a coffee-shop, and gave him a meal, and, having found out where he lived, I went home with him to a poor part of the city and was introduced to his mother, who was a widow, terribly crippled with rheumatism. She was quite willing for the boy to be bound apprentice to the business; so I got him into a ground

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tumbling troupe, and he is now doing well and making good money. His name, which I must not disclose, often tops the bill at halls in the provinces.

Once, when I had to rest through a sprained wrist, I received an anonymous letter at my lodgings. I opened the envelope, and found a smaller envelope inside, upon which was written: "Try this balsam." The inner envelope contained a five-pound note!

When performing in variety shows, the acrobat has usually a less restless time than when he is booked with a travelling circus. At all events, he is not continually on the move, and he may obtain an engagement at a hall lasting for one month.

The biggest "stars" in my profession are, in most cases, booked for months, or years, ahead; but there are lesser lights who, though really good performers, are occasionally compelled to "rest" for a spell. Artists in all lines have increased in numbers during the past twenty-five years, and there is pretty keen competition even among talented acrobats.

When I have concluded an engagement at one of the big London music-halls, it may happen that the next date booked for me is six weeks ahead. Now, I must either loaf about during that time, and live on the savings from past salaries, or trust to something coming my way.

During my "resting" times, I am a frequent caller at my agent's office. This gentleman finds me "shops," transacts all my business with managers, and receives ten per cent. of my salary. Some agents, by the way, ask fifteen per cent. for their services. Calling on my agent about eleven o'clock in the morning, I am probably received with the remark: "Morning, my boy. Sorry; but nothing has come along."

On the other hand, I may hear of a week's engagement at a hall in the north of England; or, better still, it may chance that there is an opening for my partner and myself in a London pantomime for the following Christmas. If nothing has "turned up," I ramble round to one of the professional haunts in the neighbourhood of Leicester Square, and pass the time with some old pals, talking "shop."

I have played comic acrobatic parts in nine pantomimes—once at Drury Lane and once at the Theatre Royal, Manchester. Those were paying engagements, and I enjoyed the work, although we were kept busy from midday until nearly midnight in the case of Drury Lane Theatre.

A favourite part for acrobatic actors is that of the villains in the *Babes in the Wood*. In this piece you can put in a lot of comic fooling, and much can be made out of the fencing scene in the wood. Many acrobats are foreigners, and as they can only talk English imperfectly, they are debarred from playing speaking parts in pantomimes.

It is a new experience to learn dialogue and to act on the stage of a theatre, and some performers who have been used to the ring of a circus all their lives find it rather difficult to remember their words. There are many droll stories in the profession about circus performers who have failed to learn their parts in such pieces as *Dick Turpin's Ride to York* and *Mazeppa*.

A pantomime engagement lasts from three weeks to three months, but about six weeks is the average run. When two performances are given daily, the acrobatic comedian may have to change his costume no fewer than six times, for in most pantomimes of to-day a great feature is made of the wardrobe.

When showing at one of the provincial variety "palaces" or "empires," the artists engaged for the week have to attend rehearsal on Monday morning. If you have finished work on Saturday in a Scotch city, and are engaged to appear in the West of England on the following Monday night, you may have to hurry from the hall at the conclusion of your turn and catch a train. These long, slow Sunday journeys are very tedious, and frequently there are dreary waits at cold, draughty junctions.

I could say a good deal about the draughts and the discomforts behind the scenes and in the passages of many music halls. At some minor variety houses the accommodation for artists is very poor; the dressing-rooms are used by several persons, and they are sometimes stuffy and sometimes chilly. As our business makes us very heated, we run considerable risk of catching cold after our turns.

Although most people imagine that the acrobat leads a dangerous life, it is curious how few accidents happen, considering the risks encountered. Beyond slight sprains and bruises, I have not suffered through my performances. There are, however, occasionally fatalities, especially amongst aerial artists, parachutists, and wire-walkers; but the average of deaths through accidents is not high in our profession. A good acrobat knows how to fall. He is so nimble, and his eye so trained, that if he has a slip he usually contrives to save himself from serious injury.

"Is the profession a healthy one?" is a

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question often asked. I answer "Yes." If the artist leads a regular life he has every chance of living to a good age, and enjoying better health than the man who takes little exercise.

Everyone knows that athletic exercises are beneficial to health. The acrobat is seldom a victim of indigestion, or subject to rheumatism. As an instance of the fine condition of members of our profession, I may say that if we break a bone it usually heals quickly. Dubois had a mishap one night, and broke some bones in his foot. In five weeks' time he was performing again.

How much do we earn? As much as we can. We begin as apprentices at a few shillings a week, and work up to £10 or £80 a week, according to our reputations. Some performers can command more than £80 a week, but these are the exceptionally clever or the unusually lucky ones.

Men will risk their necks for a very moderate fee. You can engage a parachutist for £15 a descent, and there are acrobats doing quite as dangerous work for much less money. Many performers give risky shows for a few pounds a week. The popular favourite who demands a big salary during a few years sometimes makes his pile, and retires to private life before his joints have grown stiff. Other successful performers start circuses of their own, and sometimes they lose their money. As for the minor artists, unless they have been careful and thrifty in good times, they have a poverty-stricken old age before them.

Our profession, like any other, has its lights and shades, and ups and downs. When the trade of the country is flourishing we are seldom out of an engagement; when trade is dull the artists of all kinds are the first to feel the pinch. Speaking for myself, I like the life, and know of no other occupation in which I could excel. I was not cut out for the desk or the counter, and I am fond of knocking about the world. In the matter of money I have not done so badly, and it is a long time since I was last really hard-up.

Perhaps it may interest you to know that I am a married man with a young family, and that my wife is not in the acrobatic business. When at home I live like an ordinary citizen in a suburb of London.

AMBITION.

I tried to be a poet,
And wrote a blank-verse play,
But when to sell it I essayed
Each publisher said "Nay."

I tried to be a singer,
And take by storm the world,
But though I sang my very best
Abuse was at me hurled.

I tried to be an actor,
To climb the hill of fame;
Although I worked my hardest
I never made a name.

I tried to be an artist
Of fashion plates galore,
But when I made an effort
I wasn't asked for more.

I tried to be a lawyer,
And plead my case in court;
The jury by their verdict
Soon told me what they thought.

So what's the use of trying—
Or the use of anything?
I'll neither write, nor act again,
Nor plead, nor paint, nor sing.

Dorothy Harrison.

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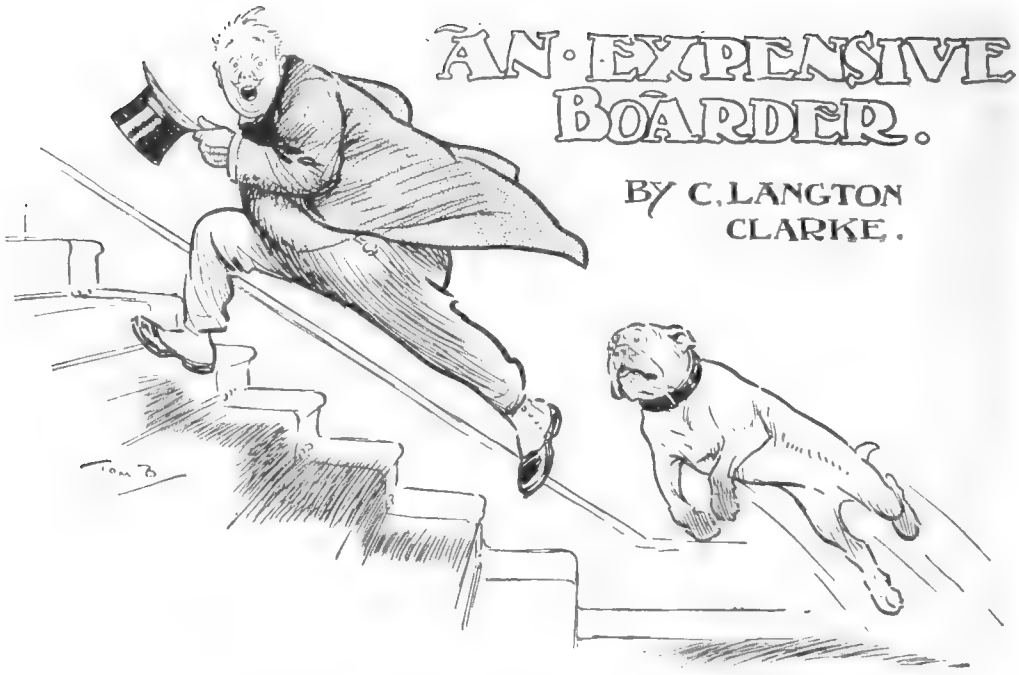
AN EXPENSIVE BOARDER.

BY C. LANGTON CLARKE.



How a Married Couple Entertained a Bulldog.

"Cousin Fred has been here," said Mrs. George Scales, as she met her husband in the hall on his return from the office. "He was awfully sorry not to see you, but he had to catch the five o'clock train for London."

Mr. Scales, who was hanging up his hat, turned round sharply.

"What does he want now?" he demanded, with some asperity.

"He doesn't want anything," Mrs. Scales replied, with spirit. "He came to see *me*. I do wish, George, you wouldn't be quite so ready to pick holes in my relations. I know Fred has been a little wild and careless, but he is doing ever so much better now."

"How long was he here?"

"He came just before lunch," replied Mrs. Scales, "and he left at four o'clock."

"Four hours," commented the husband, "and in all that time he didn't ask you to do something for him?"

"Not in the way you mean, George, with your horrid suspicions," replied his wife. "He did ask me to do something, and very glad I was to be able to do it. He begged me to take charge of something for him for a week or ten days. But he said he couldn't take him to London, because the people in the hotel wouldn't have him."

"Him?" cried Mr. Scales. "What do you mean by *him*—Fred?"

"No," replied Mrs. Scales. "Jim."

Mr. Scales sat down suddenly.

"You don't mean to tell me," he said in a trembling voice, "that you have taken charge of a child—or a baby?"

Mrs. Scales laughed.

"Not quite so bad as that," she said. "Fancy Fred travelling with a baby! Why, he dislikes them even more than you do. Come along, and I'll introduce you to Jim. He's in the breakfast-room."

She led the way, and throwing open the door pointed to the corner of the room.

"That's Jim," she said smiling.

Standing beside a heavy table, to the leg of which he was attached by a stout chain, was a huge bulldog, pure white, with the exception of a black-and-tan patch over one eye, which gave it the appearance of having been discoloured in a fight.

His lower jaw, projecting like the ram of a man-of-war, disclosed several dirty and distorted teeth, above which appeared the tip of a little pink tongue. With his kinky tail and

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stout, bandy legs, he was as truculent-looking an animal as could well be conceived, an additionally sinister expression being imparted by a slight obliquity of vision.

Utterly at a loss for words, Mr. Scales gazed on the visitor with every manifestation of abhorrence.

"You can't think what an intelligent fellow he is," continued Mrs. Scales brightly. "He made friends with me at once. Fred regularly introduced me to him. He said: 'Now, Jim, this is your mistress for a week, and you must take good care of her,' and, do you know, the dear fellow actually came up and licked my hands. Didn't you, old boy?"

The scrubby tail wriggled spasmodically, and a lumbering movement of the forelegs seemed to express assent.

"Why didn't you telephone me," demanded Mr. Scales, "so that I could get home in time?"

"In time for what?" asked his wife.

"In time to get an introduction, too," replied the husband. "I'm not particularly fond of having my hands licked by a dog, but I should prefer that to having my legs bitten."

"Don't be childish, George," remonstrated Mrs. Scales.

"Jim," she continued, "that is your master for a week. Do you understand?"

Apparently the dog did not, for he devoted all his energy to an attempt to lick Mrs. Scales' hand.

"Stupid!" said the lady, giving him a sharp little pat. "That is your master, there. Look!"

She pointed to Mr. Scales, and Jim fixed a stern eye on him.

"Don't do that," expostulated Mr. Scales sharply. "Don't point at me like that."

"Stuff!" replied the wife. "That's only his natural expression. Now I'm going to unfasten the chain."

Before her husband could remonstrate, she had unhooked the swivel, and Mr. Scales experienced all the agonies of apprehension of the early Christian martyr when the lions entered the arena.

With one finger hooked lightly in the ring of his collar, Mrs. Scales led Jim up to her husband, and permitted him several satisfying sniffs at the latter's legs.

"Put your hands where he can lick them," she commanded. "Then he will make friends."

Mr. Scales, with little nervous chills running up and down his spine, obediently laid his hands on his knees.

Jim transferred his attentions from Mr. Scales' legs to his fingers, but failed to make the advances which Mrs. Scales expected.

"It's that horrible tar soap you will insist on using," she said. "You can't expect a dog to enjoy the taste of tar. Can't you go and wash it off!"

"And rub some butter on instead, I suppose?" Mr. Scales returned sarcastically. "No, thank you. If Bill Sikes, here, can't make friends without licking my hands, we'll have to let it go at that!"

The sound of the dinner gong put an end to further argument, and husband and wife proceeded to the dining-room, the third member of the party waddling behind, with his gaze fastened on Mr. Scales' calves.

During the meal Mr. Scales contrived, through the medium of several large pieces of steak, to establish relations, which, if not absolutely friendly, were at least not hostile, and by the time the evening meal was well advanced was able to move about without the paralyzing feeling that at any moment those formidable teeth might be fixed in some portion of his anatomy.

When bedtime came Jim was accommodated with several large and downy cushions in a corner of the breakfast-room, the husband turning a resolutely deaf ear to his wife's hints that the poor fellow would feel lonely.

* * * * *

Mr. Scales had just fallen into his first refreshing slumber, when he was awakened by a long-drawn howl, which seemed to come from under the bed.

"What the mischief's that?" he asked, starting up, and temporarily oblivious of his unwelcome guest.

"Jim, I suppose," responded his wife sleepily. "I told you he would feel lonely, but you wouldn't listen. You had better go down and make him keep quiet."

"Make him keep quiet?" echoed Mr. Scales indignantly. "How on earth am I to do that?"

"Give him a few good sharp slaps," suggested Mrs. Scales, in the same somnolent tone. "Please don't talk so much; I want to go to sleep."

Mr. Scales, who would as readily have entered a cage of ravening tigers as venture his person inside the breakfast-room while occupied by its present tenant, resigned himself to the inevitable. He was a light sleeper, and the remainder of his rest was broken by the protesting howls of the imprisoned dog,

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and a series of terrifying dreams, in which the animal took a leading part.

Next morning Jim, eager for human society after his solitary confinement, greeted his host in a comparatively friendly fashion. A few pieces of fish, administered at breakfast, still further cemented the alliance, and when Mr. Scales left for his office, the animal graciously accompanied him to the front door.

Unfortunately, at the moment Mr. Scales opened the door, a large Persian cat, the cherished pet of a maiden lady who lived two doors away, was sunning herself contentedly on the steps.

There was a short, grunting bark; the hurtling of a heavy body against Mr. Scales' legs, almost throwing him off his balance; a strangled squall, and the next moment a fifty-guinea cat was lying dead on the steps; while Jim, licking his lips with infinite relish, was slowly lumbering back into the house.

Appalled by the suddenness and enormity of the tragedy, Mr. Scales stood, for a few seconds, staring at the lifeless bundle of fur. Then, rallying his scattered faculties, he hurriedly seized it by the tail, and dragged it into the hall.

He carried it at arm's length upstairs, closely followed by the delighted Jim, and presented the thing to the horrified gaze of his wife.

"Look what your precious dog has done now!" he said. "Miss Merryweather's prize cat!"

"Take it away!" shrieked Mrs. Scales. "Take it away at once! What did you bring the horrid thing in here for? Oh, you bad, wicked dog!" and she shook her finger at the impatient culprit. "It's all your fault, George. You had no business to open the door so carelessly. Jim might have run away!"

"No such luck," returned Mr. Scales grimly. "If I thought he'd do that I would have every door in the house open. The question is—what's to be done about this cat? Miss Merryweather will be frantic."

"Was anyone watching?" Mrs. Scales inquired.

"Not a soul," replied her husband. "There was nobody near, and the cat hardly made a sound. I lost no time in getting the poor thing into the house, you may be sure."

"Oh, well," said Mrs. Scales, in a greatly relieved tone, "I don't see that it really matters so very much. Of course, I'm awfully sorry for the poor cat and Miss Merryweather, but I don't see how we can be held responsible. Jim isn't our dog, you know."

"I hope Miss Merryweather will appreciate the distinction," Mr. Scales replied bitterly.

"There is no reason why she should know anything about it," Mrs. Scales replied sharply. "It would be most unkind to tell her. Think what her feelings would be! Such a dreadful death!"

Mr. Scales, still holding the cat by the tail, stared at his wife in silent amazement.

"What you had better do, George," that lady continued, "is to put the body in the cellar, and to-night, when it is dark, you can slip out and bury it in the back garden. Miss Merryweather is sure to think it has been stolen, and as a valuable cat like that would be well taken care of, she will not feel so badly about it. Really, George, it's far the most Christian way to settle it."

"And supposing she asks whether we have seen it?" Mr. Scales hazarded.

"Oh, well," replied Mrs. Scales easily, "you can say that when you went out of the house to go to your office you saw it sitting on the steps. That would be the truth."

With another long stare, Mr. Scales turned speechlessly away, and, bearing his burden to the cellar, laid it on a remote shelf. Then, having first ascertained that Jim was safe upstairs, he departed for his office, his mind a whirl of conflicting emotions.

Late the same night, Mr. Scales, bearing a spade and a soap-box coffin, slipped out into the garden, and, with many uneasy glances over his shoulder, consigned the body of the cat to the tomb. He realised to the full the sensations of a murderer disposing of his victim, and it was a positive relief to get back into the well-lighted house.

His one consolation was the attitude of friendliness assumed by Jim, who evidently regarded his host as a confederate in crime, and treated him with marked cordiality.

The following evening Mr. and Mrs. Scales were seated in the study, the former busy with his paper, and the latter engaged in some sewing, when the wife broke a long silence by saying:

"Miss Merryweather was in to-day about her cat."

"Oh!" said Mr. Scales. "And what did you tell her?"

"Just what you told me to say," replied Mrs. Scales placidly.

Mr. Scales looked hard at his wife, and was about to demand further explanations, but thought better of it.

"Where's Jim?" he inquired.

"In the breakfast-room, I fancy," Mrs. Scales replied. "He went in there after

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"Take it away!" shrieked Mrs. Scales. "Take it away at once!"

dinner, and curled up on the cushions. Shall I call him?"

"I think we can get along without his society," said Mr. Scales. "So long as he is out of mischief, I don't care where he is. By the way, I expect Butterworth may drop in to-night. He is just back from London."

The words were hardly out of Mr. Scales' mouth when the door bell was rung sharply, and a moment later a step resounded in the hall.

"I'll bet that's Butterworth now," he added. "Yes, that's his step for a sovereign. He's coming up."

There was no doubt that the person who had just entered the house was coming up. Mr. Scales had hardly finished speaking when there came the sound of scrambling feet ascending the stairs several steps at a time, followed by a swift rush along the passage.

The door was dashed open, and a short, stout man, very much out of breath, precipitated himself into the room, and, closing the door with great violence, flung himself against it. At the same moment a heavy body was heard to impinge on the lower panels.

Mr. and Mrs. Scales rose simultaneously, in consternation at this sudden irruption.

"Good Lord, Butterworth!" ejaculated the former. "What on earth's the matter?"

"Matter!" shouted Mr. Butterworth as loudly as his breathless condition would permit. "What sort of a welcome is this in a friend's house? I had hardly put my foot on the first step when I heard a queer noise behind me—a sort of grunting noise. I looked back, and there, coming full tilt out of that little side room, was the most awful-looking beast I ever saw. If he hadn't slithered along and upset in trying to turn on that waxed floor he'd have had me as sure as a gun. I heard his teeth clash together like a crocodile's as I got through the door. He only missed me by a few inches!"

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"Why, Mr. Butterworth," said Mrs. Scales laughing, "that was only Jim. He's the friendliest dog—isn't he, George? If you had only stood quite still I am sure he wouldn't have hurt you."

Mr. Butterworth, who was clinging to the handle of the door with both hands as if he feared it might be forced open, snorted in reply.

"George was just as foolish about him at first," Mrs. Scales continued, "and now he would hate to part with him—wouldn't you, George?"

"I think I could manage to survive it," responded Mr. Scales drily. "Sit down, Butterworth, and let go of that door-handle. Jim is a highly intelligent animal, but hardly equal to turning it."

Mr. Butterworth, feeling that he had not presented himself in a very heroic light, complied rather sulkily, and after a few precautionary manœuvres Jim was brought into the room and formally introduced. He seemed much disappointed at finding his expected prey established as a friend of the family, and, while he accepted him as such, evidently did so with a mental reservation.

"Why don't you lose the brute?" Mr. Butterworth asked, when the two men were alone and Mr. Scales had confided his detestation of the animal.

"I tried to this morning," replied the other, "but it was no go. I opened the back gate and let him run out in the lane, hoping to see the last of him, but not a bit of it. Back he came in five minutes. He knows when he's well off. My wife spoils him. I wish someone would steal him."

"Get him stolen, then," Mr. Butterworth suggested. "Nothing easier. I know a man who will be delighted to do it for a trifle. It's his trade. Your wife needn't know anything about it. You can console her by telling her that a dog like that is sure of a good home."

Mr. Scales, recalling his wife's sophistries on the subject of Miss Merryweather's cat, chuckled audibly, and a low-voiced colloquy ensued, in the course of which the conspirators laid down the general outlines of the plot.

"I'll drop him a line to call at your office at eleven to morrow," Mr. Butterworth said as he rose to take his departure. "Mixey's one of the biggest rascals unhung, but he's useful at times. And as for you," he added, shaking his fist stealthily at the unconscious Jim, "I'll teach you to chase a gentleman upstairs like a burglar."

* * * * *

Precisely at eleven o'clock the following morning Mr. Scales' office boy ushered into his master's private sanctum one of the most disreputable-looking characters that gentleman had ever beheld. He wore a faded brown rain-coat several sizes too large for him, and his most noticeable features were a carmine-coloured nose and one watery grey eye, which wandered over the room and Mr. Scales' person in a most disconcerting fashion.

"Your name is Mixey?" Mr. Scales inquired, after motioning his visitor to the oldest chair in the office.

The other nodded.

"That's the name my friends know me by," he replied, in a voice raucous from much whisky-and-water. "My proper name is Jonathan Mimbury."

"Oh!" said Mr. Scales, with an uncomfortable feeling that he had suffered a rebuke for undue familiarity. "Mr. Butterworth spoke to me about you."

"Ah!" said Mr. Mimbury. "He's a real good friend, Mr. Butterworth is, and any friends of his is also friends of mine."

Mr. Scales could not help wondering whether he would in future be classed by his villainous-looking visitor among his intimates.

"I want you to steal a dog for me," he said, coming to the point at once.

Mr. Mimbury, who was accustomed to having delicate subjects approached in a more roundabout fashion, looked shocked.

"Steal a dog, sir?" he repeated in pained surprise. "That's a matter of gaol. Besides, it's sinful."

"There's no question of gaol in this case," Mr. Scales replied reassuringly. "It's my own dog—at least, it belongs to a relation of mine, which comes to the same thing."

Mr. Mimbury looked dubious.

"I got into trouble once, through stea—through having a dog follow me. It belonged to a cousin of the gentleman as wanted it, and the fuss he made over it you'd hardly believe. He actually wanted to have us both gaoled."

Mr. Scales impatiently waved aside this precedent as by no means analogous, and in a few words made his visitor acquainted with the facts of the case. Mr. Mimbury's expression at once changed from perplexity and reproach to pleased acquiescence.

"That's easy enough," he said. "You let him out for a bit of a run in the lane when you go home to lunch, and I'll be there with a little something in my pocket that I know the secret of. That dog'd follow me anywhere—into a church, even."

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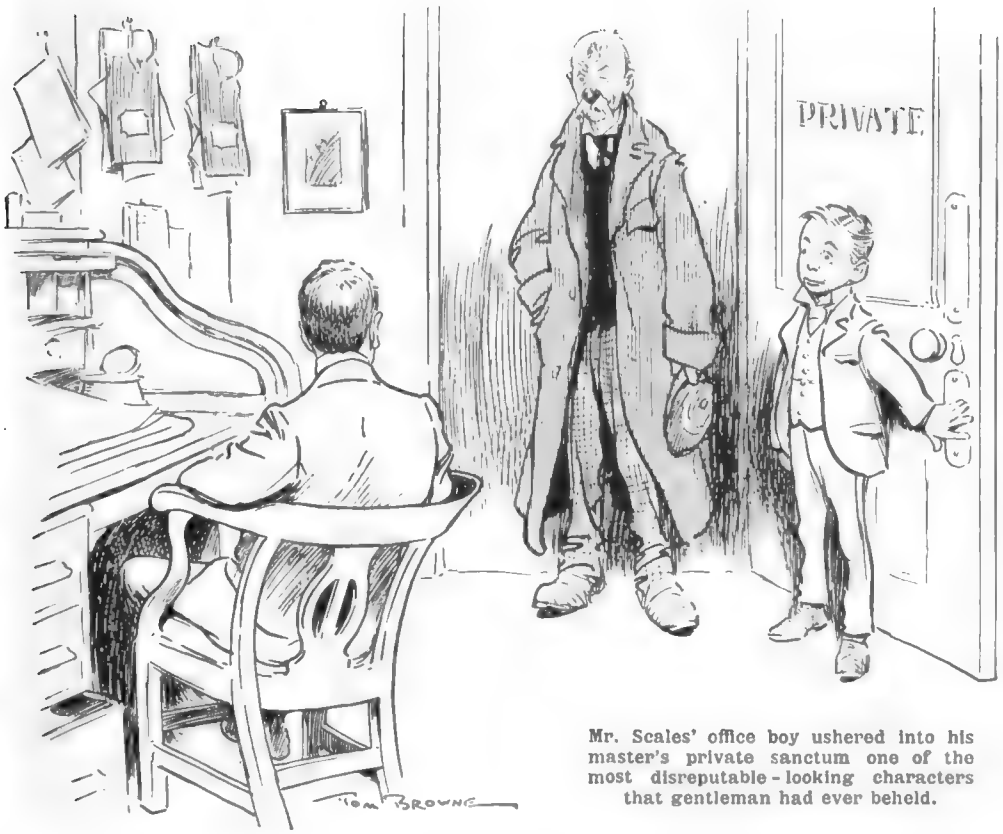

Mr. Scales' office boy ushered into his master's private sanctum one of the most disreputable-looking characters that gentleman had ever beheld.

Impressed by his visitor's confidence in his own powers, Mr. Scales handed over half-a-sovereign.

"Of course, you keep the dog," he said. "And, mind—not a word to anyone about this. I particularly don't want my wife to know."

Mr. Mimbury winked with his blind eye in a ghastly fashion and took his departure, faithfully promising to be on hand at the time appointed.

* * * * *

When Mr. Scales returned home for luncheon he met, descending the steps of his house, an austere-looking female with a cold grey eye, whose garments seemed to have been hewn out of a block of wood.

"Good-morning, Miss Merryweather," said Mr. Scales, raising his hat. "I was sorry to hear that you had lost your cat."

Miss Merryweather received her neighbour's salutation with marked frigidity.

"I did lose it, Mr. Scales," she said, articulating her words with great distinctness. "But I have recovered it."

Mr. Scales stared at her open-mouthed.

"Recovered it?" he repeated faintly.

"No wonder you look surprised," the lady continued, "particularly after the assurances I received from Mrs. Scales that neither she nor you knew anything of its disappearance!"

"Will you kindly explain?" Mr. Scales interrupted, with a poor attempt at dignity.

"There is very little to explain, Mr. Scales," Miss Merryweather replied. "This morning I was looking out of one of my rear windows when I noticed a dog—a most disreputable-looking dog I must say—digging furiously in a corner of your garden. I watched him with some little curiosity, wondering what he could be so busy about. My interest was soon rewarded. Out of the hole which he had dug he dragged the body"—Miss Merryweather's voice trembled, but she mastered her emotion—"the body, Mr. Scales, of my poor cat!"

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"Good Heavens, Miss Merryweather!" Mr. Scales cried, in admirably counterfeited surprise and indignation. "That miserable dog! We are taking charge of him for a few days to oblige Mrs. Scales' cousin. He must have caught your cat in the garden and killed and buried it. Extraordinary what a mania dogs seem to have for burying things!"

Miss Merryweather sniffed three times at solemn intervals.

"I am not well acquainted with the habits of dogs, Mr. Scales," she said, "but I have yet to learn that they take the trouble to coffin the remains of their victims before interring them!"

Mr. Scales opened his mouth to reply, but words failed him.

"I took the liberty," Miss Merryweather continued, "as soon as the fierce dog had gone back into the house, of entering your garden by the side gate to assure myself that it was indeed the body of my poor cat. I looked into the grave from which it had been taken, and judge of my surprise when I saw the gnawed and broken fragments of the box—a soap-box, if I am not mistaken—in which it had been buried. I beg your pardon?"

"I did not speak," said the hapless Mr. Scales.

"Just as well," replied the lady. "I have only this to say: At the last cat show my cat was valued by an expert at the exceedingly conservative sum of fifty guineas. Unless I receive that amount by next Monday I shall consult my lawyers. Our acquaintance, of course, ends from this minute."

She swept haughtily past without waiting for a reply, and Mr. Scales, angry and humiliated, went into the house to find his wife in tears.

"Why in the name of goodness, George, didn't you bury that beast of a cat deeper?" she cried reproachfully. "You always leave things half done. You don't know what horrible things Miss Merryweather has been saying. She is a regular cat herself! She as good as told me I was a liar!"

"What did you tell her when she first asked about the cat?" demanded her husband sternly.

"I told her I didn't know anything about it," Mrs. Scales replied defiantly.

"Well, in that case——" began Mr. Scales, but thought better of it.

"Oh, well," he resumed, with an attempt at cheerfulness. "I suppose there's nothing for it but to pay and look pleasant. Miss Merryweather could make things nasty for us. Where's that confounded dog?"

"In the kitchen with Emma." Mrs. Scales replied; "and there's not the slightest use in beating him."

"Beating him?" cried the husband. "Do you think I am tired of life? I'm going to try moral suasion. I shall take him out in the garden beside the grave and read him a little lecture." Ignoring his wife's petulant "I do wish you wouldn't try to be funny!" Mr. Scales repaired to the garden, followed by Jim. A glance at the grave confirmed his resolution, and gently opening the back gate he watched the dog waddling along the lane, at the far end of which could be descried the lurking figure of Mr. Mimbury.

Harmonious relations between dog and dog-stealer were soon established, and, having waited until the two figures were out of sight, Mr. Scales, with a sigh of relief, returned to the house.

Thrice that afternoon did his office telephone convey the information that Jim had not returned, and Mr. Scales invoked blessings on the heads of Mr. Butterworth and Mixey, hypocritically expressing his concern.

The third time, Mrs. Scales informed him that she intended to insert an advertisement in the Lost and Found column of the morning paper, and Mr. Scales, who was busy with a likely customer, promptly assented.

"How much reward should I offer?" Mrs. Scales asked.

"Anything you like," the husband replied impatiently. "It doesn't matter."

"It matters a great deal!" protested his wife. "I must get Jim back, but I don't want to pay too much. Shall I make it five pounds?"

"All right," said Mr. Scales, who felt secure in his treachery.

He gave no more attention to the subject until the evening, when Mrs. Scales pointed out the advertisement with some pride and insisted on his leaving the amount of the reward. Mr. Scales, chuckling inwardly, handed it over, and perfidiously expressed the hope that Jim might be brought back safe and sound.

"Far too valuable a dog to lose," he said. "Or for Mixey to part with, once he has his claws on it," he added under his breath.

Mr. Butterworth dropped into Mr. Scales' office in the course of the morning, and to him the latter related the success of the conspiracy.

"The brute won't bother me any more,"

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he said complacently. "You have a great head, Butterworth."

"But I see you've advertised for him," the other remarked in some perplexity.

"Oh, that was my wife's doings," replied Mr. Scales airily. "I couldn't well prevent it without arousing suspicions, and it only amounts to the cost of the ad. Come home to lunch and help me to face the lamentations."

There were no lamentations, however, when the two men arrived. On the contrary, Mrs. Scales' face, as she met them in the hall, was radiant.

"I've got two pleasant surprises for you, George!" she cried. "I'll give you three guesses."

Mr. Scales laughingly shook his head.

"Give it up," he said.

"First and foremost," said Mrs. Scales, emphasising the importance of her news with her forefinger, "Jim's back!"

"*What!*" cried Mr. Scales aghast. "Jim back? How on earth did he get back?"

"He didn't *get* back," replied Mrs. Scales, laughing happily. "He was brought by the queerest old man with one eye, who said he found him wandering about at the other end of the town. He told me such a pathetic story. It seems he has been out of work for ever so long, and his wife and children were nearly starving. He almost cried when I paid him the reward. I want you to try and do something for him, George."

"You bet I will!" assented George, with so much intensity that his wife stared at him. "The infernal scoundrel!"

Mrs. Scales drew herself up.

"I know the man by your description," continued Mr. Scales, forgetting that his wife had only mentioned the loss of one eye. "I have heard of him through Butterworth, who is a friend of his."

He darted an indignant look at his companion, whose countenance wore a most insufferable grin.

"Butterworth has some most peculiar friends. The man never had a wife or family. He is a rascally professional thief and dog-stealer!"

Mrs. Scales sniffed incredulously.

"You haven't asked me what the second surprise is," she said.

"Go ahead," urged Mr. Scales, "but break it gently, please."

"I had a letter from Fred this morning," continued his wife, her spirits noticeably dampened by her husband's unresponsiveness. "He writes that he has to go on to Liverpool on business, and will not return this way."

"Come, that's a piece of good news, anyway," said Mr. Scales.

Mrs. Scales bit her lip with indignation.

"Of course you know he owes you some money," she said.

"I believe I have a faint recollection of that fact," Mr. Scales replied grimly; "but I can refresh my memory by a look at my cheque-book."

"How thoroughly nasty you are, George!" protested Mrs. Scales. "You are most unjust to Fred at the very time he is trying to repay you for your kindness. He wants you to keep Jim for your very own."

"Does he, indeed?" Mr. Scales observed with bitter sarcasm. "Very kind of him, I'm sure."

"Fred says," Mrs. Scales went on in a very cold voice, "that Jim is worth thirty pounds if he is worth a farthing. He mentions the name of a man who will give you twenty-five pounds at once, but he thinks you ought to get more without any trouble."

Mr. Scales' heavily beclouded countenance brightened at once.

"Come, come," he said cheerfully, "Master Fred isn't such a bad fellow after all. I confess I don't know much about dogs. I'd no idea Jim was so valuable. Let's go and have a look at the gold mine."

"He's in the garden," replied Mrs. Scales, delighted at her husband's altered manner. "I put him there as soon as the man brought him back. He said it was hardly safe to have him in the house till you came home, as no one could tell where he had been, and he might have disease germs about him. He advised that you should wash him at once with disinfecting soap. Really, George, I'm sure you do the man an injustice. He was most kind and thoughtful."

Without replying, Mr. Scales hurried out to the garden, followed by his wife and friend.

He called, he whistled, but there was no response, and a brief investigation of all possible places of concealment showed that Jim had vanished.

"It's Miss Merryweather," said Mrs. Scales fiercely. "She has made away with Jim out of revenge for her cat!"

"Nonsense!" retorted Mr. Scales fiercely. "It's easy to see how he got out. You left this back gate open."

"I didn't," replied Mrs. Scales with equal heat. "I saw to it myself that every gate was closed."

Mr. Butterworth pointed to a small piece

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of stick which had been thrust into the latch from the outside, and still hung there.

"Mixey," he said; "so that's why he advised leaving the dog in the garden. He got the reward, and then he sneaked the dog again. By gad! he's a smart chap!"

Mr. Scales, unconscious in his woe of the dominant note of admiration in his friend's voice, dropped on a rustic seat which stood conveniently near.

"Fifty pounds for a dead Persian cat," he said hopelessly. "Five pound ten—I should say five pounds—put right into the pocket of the biggest scoundrel unhung. All this trouble and worry, and now twenty-five pounds gone in a bunch! Of all the infernal tangles! And I told the villain he might keep the dog," he added in a voice which he took care should not reach the ears of his wife.

"If you know the man," said Mrs. Scales, with some contempt, "you can catch him easily enough!"

"If I know the man," said Mr. Butterworth, "you won't do anything of the kind."

And Mr. Butterworth was right.

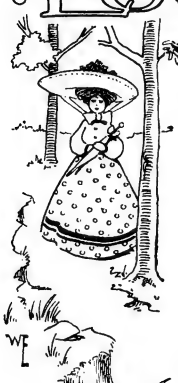
Of Mixey and Jim not a trace could be found. They had vanished as utterly as if the earth had swallowed them.

* * * * *

Two years later Mr. Scales learnt indirectly of a curious phenomenon in connection with a bulldog. A fancier had purchased one, almost entirely black, from a one-eyed rover. Three months later the animal turned a pale green, and thence passed through shades of orange and canary-yellow to pure white.

From which Mr. Scales concluded that Mr. Mimbury had invested part of his ill-gotten gains in a bottle of hair-dye.

LOVE'S VIGIL.



Far from the busy throng I sit
Upon a snow-white gate;
While, with a fondly-beating heart,
My dear love I await.

The giant trees on every hand
Throw shadows on the ground;
From every branch some songster pours
His melody around.

More joyous than the birds' glad strain,
My heart with rapture hums;
And now it gives a deeper thrill—
Behold, my darling comes.

The sun upon her golden hair
Shines through the trees aslant;
I rise to greet her—I should say
I *try* to rise, but *can't*.

This really is the strangest gate
With which I ever met;
Whatever can be holding me?—
Great Scott! the paint is wet!

Herbert J. Brandon.

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Photo Russell & Sons.

An enormous Cup-tie crowd at the Crystal Palace. Notice the people on the roofs of the buildings, and in the trees.

THE SPIRIT OF THE CROWD.

An Interesting Study of Great Crowds and Their Characteristics.

By Marcus Woodward.

In a crowd, the individual loses his individuality.

Merged in the multitude, the single being catches the spirit of the multitude, forgets himself, his hopes, his fears, and for the time being is as much like his fellows as one sheep is like all the other sheep of a flock. And, sheep-like, what his nearest neighbour does, he does; he shouts when his neighbour shouts with joy; when his neighbour sobs, he sobs—not knowing or caring for the reason why.

Perhaps you have seen a flock of sea-birds flying against a grey sky. At one moment, the flock is heading towards you, the sunlight falls on each bird's white breast, and the whole flock is clear and distinct. A moment later, every bird has turned his grey back to you, and the flock is almost lost to view, to reappear with startling distinctness, as the birds again turn, in another moment.

Why did the birds turn? How came it about that a flock of a hundred or a thousand individuals should act as one bird on a common impulse to make an instantaneous change in the course of their flight? Who gave the word? Who led the way? The only answer is: "The Spirit of the Flock." And it is the same answer that explains why a crowd of human beings is joyful at one moment, sad at the next. "The Spirit of the Crowd" is diffused among all the collected individuals.

Teachers of human beings, accustomed to large classes, well understand this. Professor John Adams was lecturing on teaching the other day in London, and remarked: "In the crowd there is an extension of the universal element." He pointed out that St. Paul has

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recorded that for the space of two hours the Ephesians, gathered in a crowd, kept shouting: "Great is Diana of the Ephesians." No single member of that crowd, standing alone, would have kept up that cry for two hours on end!

Again, after one of the British victories in the Boer War, there was a crowd of members in the Stock Exchange. In the excitement of hearing the good news, they flung up their hats; with the result that most of the members went home wearing other people's hats. Now, not one of the members would have done anything so foolish as to risk losing his hat if he had been alone when he heard the news.

Photo *E. Hawkins & Co., Brighton.*

An immense crowd leaving the Oval after the Test Match in 1896.

Professor Adams went on to show that it is easier to teach a class than an individual; because the class is more uniform. Individuals are always changing.

A boy at school is one personality when with a big boy, another when with a small boy; he is one boy on the football field, and a totally different boy in chapel; when at home he is a different boy, according to whether he is dealing with his father or his sister; he may even be a different boy in one class from what he is in another. But a class, like a crowd, is governed by one spirit; the individual takes on the individuality of the multitude.

Crowds are full of mystery. Nothing is more mysterious than the way in which street crowds suddenly collect. What is the impulse that compels you to stop and join the crowd? It has been described well by a French writer, sketching the gathering of a Paris street crowd. "*Voilà!*" says the individual, "all the world is gathering itself together. I will do as the world is doing." And that is all there is to it.

The individual in the crowd forgets himself, but he is not so ready to forget his neighbour. If a crowd receives a sudden shock or disappointment, the individual will laugh at his neighbour's discomfiture, quite oblivious of the fact that he himself is discomfited, too—and oblivious that his neighbour is laughing at him.

On the day of King Edward's Coronation, when some five million people were packing the streets of London, at about eleven o'clock in the morning, a sudden roar of cheers rolled along Pall Mall. The crowds round the corner in Trafalgar Square were stirred to

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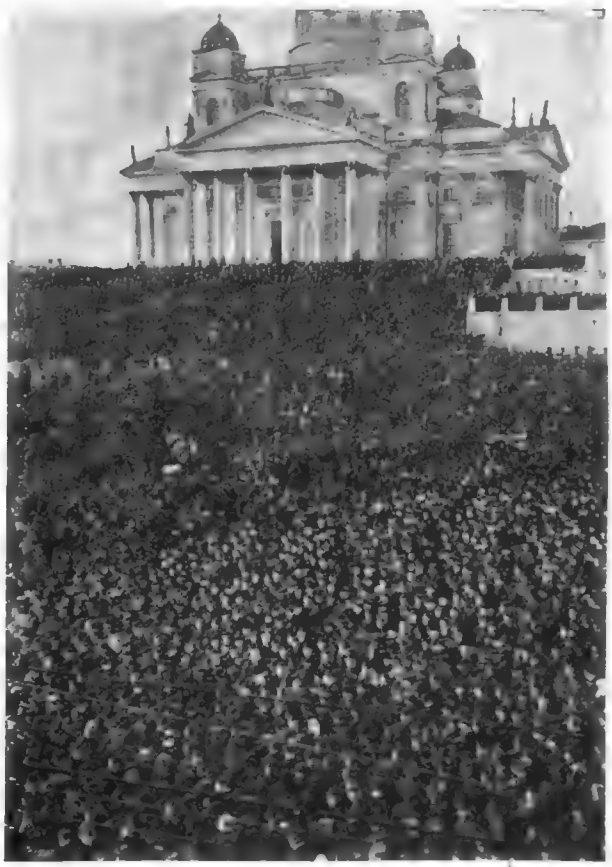
Photo London Stereoscopic Co.

Crowd assembled to hear the Lord Mayor announce the dissolution of the late Parliament.

a frenzy of curiosity and excitement. All necks were strained in the direction whence the inexplicable cheering rose; everyone prepared to show a burst of enthusiasm if any Royal personages appeared.

At last the cause of the cheering in Pall Mall was made clear to the Trafalgar Square crowds. A sand-cart, wherein stood some municipal workmen, was passing along the route; the men in it were making superb ironical bows to the populace. Then went up a great roar of laughter,



A popular demonstration against the police in the Senate Square, Helsingfors.

a stupendous outburst from thousands of throats, spontaneous, sky-shaking. Each man in the crowd was laughing at the crowd's disappointment.

Every general knows that in battle, when two forces are hotly opposing one another, a moment is likely to come when one or the other of the forces will waver, will hesitate, and will be lost. Fear spreads with magical swiftness through a crowd; let one rank of an advancing force fall back a step, and that step is the signal for a wholesale

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Stereograph Copyright Underwood & Underwood, London and New York.

A typical Japanese crowd assembled to witness the annual wrestling contest at Tokio.

retreat; an utter rout follows. So with a crowd of peaceable citizens, gathered to enjoy themselves. Panic follows the slightest suspicion that something is wrong.

Another instance may be drawn from the enormous crowds that gathered to see the King's Coronation procession.

The procession along the return route was half-an-hour late. The people in the streets grew uneasy. Whispered fears passed from mouth to mouth; a strange silence fell on the crowds. And the general feeling of depression, of apprehension, was deepened by a heavy rain-cloud that darkened the sky. All sorts of things were feared, and in one stand a woman fainted, simply through nervous dread that "something had happened."

Then was heard the booming of guns, announcing that the King had left the Abbey a crowned monarch. Instantly the crowd was itself again—cheerful and expectant.

The human being is a gregarious animal—he likes company. It is this instinct that lies at the bottom of rural depopulation. People will travel great distances to join a crowd even when they take little or no interest in the object which has brought the crowd together.

Thus football enthusiasts travel from all parts of Great Britain to be present at the Final Tie of the football season, and they are always accompanied by many who take no interest in a football match, but love to swell a crowd. Scores of those who are present at the great final fights for "The Cup" hardly so much as glance at the players.

When Queen Victoria's funeral procession passed through London, thousands upon thousands of people waited patiently in positions from which they could not hope to see so much as the pennant of a passing soldier's lance. They were there; they were among an historic crowd; that was enough. They were content—as an aged couple said who paid five shillings for chairs *in the area* of a house in the Edgware Road—they were content "to feel the dear old Queen a-passing by."

A crowd is very easily distracted; this is a noteworthy characteristic of all crowds. Considering the vast numbers of people who were packed in London when the late Queen's

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funeral procession passed through, the crowds were extremely reverent. The people were fully alive to the solemnity of the occasion; and nowhere was this more noticeable than in Hyde Park, where the crowd was most dense. Yet, solemn and reverent as was the people's behaviour, every now and then roars of laughter would be heard, to be suppressed, however, almost instantly.

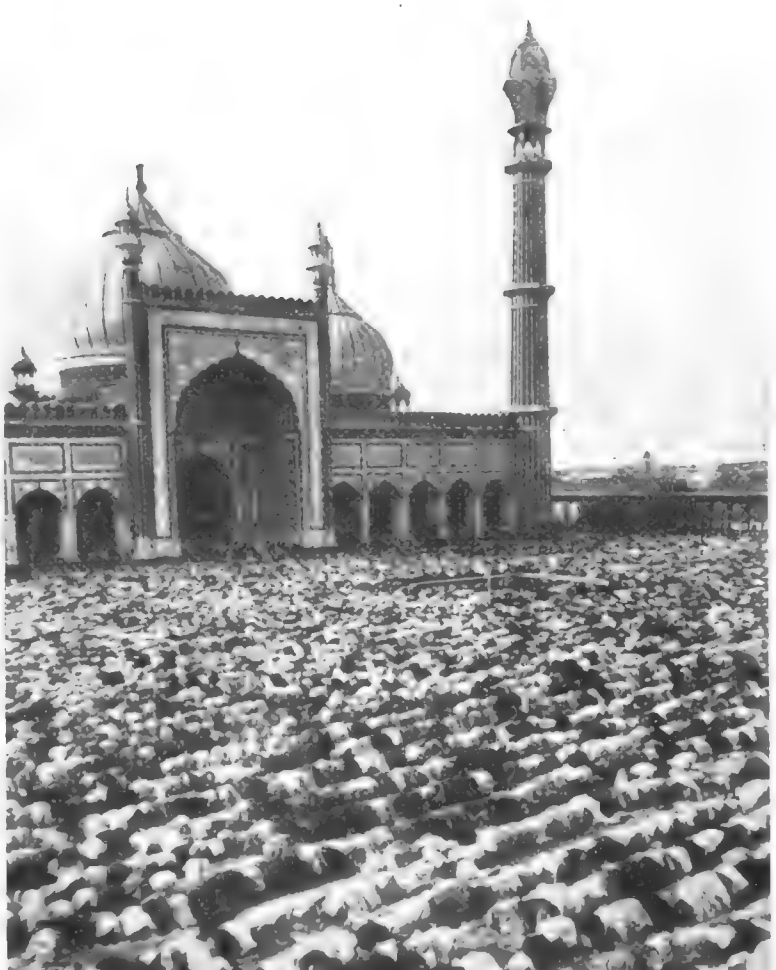
A common cause for merriment were the misfortunes of the boys and men who climbed trees in order to secure a good view of the procession. One daring policeman attracted the attention of thousands of eyes as he climbed a tree in chase of a sailor who refused to come down at his word. Higher and higher mounted the sailor; but the policeman doggedly followed. The crowd watched the chase with intense interest. At last the sailor attained the topmost, slenderest bough. Would the policeman dare follow?—this was the one thought in the mind of everyone who watched the chase; all else was forgotten. Yes, the policeman set his heavy foot on the bough—with the inevitable result, down fell pursued and pursuer on the people's heads.

Probably Hyde Park had never before heard the like of the roar of laughter that went up, certainly never on such an occasion.

A moment later the sound of Chopin's Funeral March was heard in the distance, and the head of the melancholy procession entered the park. Instantly there was silence again, the crowd remembered something forgotten, and it was as though a holy awe descended on the waiting multitudes.

Good humour is, above all, the characteristic of British crowds. Discomforts are nothing. In the year 1905, 101,000 people assembled at the Crystal Palace to see Aston Villa football team play Newcastle United in the "Cup Final." It was justly said that there were present "a hundred and one thousand good-humoured spectators."

Men and boys on these occasions sit patiently on trees, on the roofs of buildings,



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A crowd of devout Mussulmans observing the hour of prayer outside a mosque.

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on telegraph-poles, even on the sharp edges of a fence lined with corrugated iron. From a distance the banks of people piled round a football match make an extraordinary sight—a sea of ebbing and flowing faces, now all turned one way, now all the other way. Excitement runs so high that even the stolid British policeman is carried away by enthusiasm.

Policemen have been known to cheer at football matches, even to throw their helmets into the air.

So infectious is the spirit of the crowd! It is as ready to weep as to laugh; as easily inspired as made ashamed; as quickly gathered as dispersed.

The actor Sothern, the creator of Lord Dundreary and his whiskers, loved to collect crowds by way of a practical joke. His favourite trick was to stop suddenly in a busy street, and gaze up at the sky as though he had seen the heavens open to display some wondrous vision. First one and then another would stop to look at the entranced figure, until soon a crowd would assemble; but still Sothern would gaze on, with rapt and eager visage. Then he would turn on the throng around him with a wild stare as of insanity, and stride on his way.

At other times he would collect a host in the streets by standing still and staring at the pavement at his feet; or he would take a seat in a public place and terrify all beholders by making his mobile face assume every possible expression, from blank idiocy to eager inspiration, from tragic gloom to maddest mirth.

But Sothern, like all actors, suffered from a wholesome dread of the crowd when it was his object to make a favourable impression. It is one thing for a man to make a fool of a crowd when he has nothing to lose by doing so. But, when his reputation is at stake, he looks upon the crowd with very different eyes. It is then a fearsome monster.

Sothern and John Toole once were dining together before going to their respective theatres. Each was to play a favourite part that night, a part that had been played many hundreds of times before. One would have imagined that the actors in this case would have had no fear of meeting their public. But Sothern, speaking to his brother comedian, said: "I don't know how you feel, John, but I'm as nervous to-night as I was on my first appearance on the stage." And, strange as it may seem, Toole confessed to the same feeling.

Crowds of devout Indians bathing in the Ganges to atone for the sins they have committed during their lives.

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Mrs. Smith In Error

The Story of a Scheming Widow Whose Plans Failed.

By Gertie de S. Wentworth-James.

Mrs. Smith glanced at her dinner-partner's profile, and liked it.

Even when Mr. Smith was alive she had thought it a nice profile, but now that eighteen months of widowhood had passed over her head, its attractive points offered more profound food for reflection.

And besides the profile, £800 a year added to her own income would be useful. "Willerby" was a prettier name than "Smith," and "a heart on the rebound is easily caught"! (At least, so we are told.)

Mrs. Smith dropped her serviette, and, as she thanked Hugh Willerby for picking it up, she smiled right into his eyes—such a sympathetic, yet brilliant and captivating, smile.

"Forgive me for asking, but aren't you and Nita Fenning ever going to—er—well, 'to kiss and be friends'?" she said impulsively. (It would be interesting to discover how far the heart was rebounding.)

"I—er——," began Hugh, with the stiffness and inanity of immaculate breeding, "I—er—really——"

"Now, don't be cross, *please*—nobody is ever cross with *me;* and surely I'm privileged, because not only h-have I known tr-trouble myself, but also Nita is one of my dearest friends."

Instantly humanity overcame inanity, and Hugh's good breeding left off being assertive.

"I was aware you knew Ni—er—Miss Fenning, but didn't know she was a great friend of yours," he replied, motioning away an *entrée* with an irritation that was unfair on *fricassée de volaille.*

"Oh! yes—*very* great!"

"Then, Mrs. Smith, I may talk freely to you. No, I don't suppose we shall ever—er—make it up, for the simple reason that she refuses to see me and let me explain matters. I know everything could be put right if only we met, but a man can't force himself on a girl who declines to receive him, or to read his letters. I did once go down to where she lives—Oxbury, don't you know—but when after two hours' journey I was greeted by a nasty cold douche of 'not at home'—well, naturally I haven't tried any more."

"*Naturally*—of *course!* You *couldn't!*"

"But I—I—er—er—have always thought, don't you know, if some mutual friend could arrange a sort of surprise meeting between us, things might come right. I *know* I've only got to make her hear my explanation! Er—er—I suppose, Mrs. Smith—it's infernal impudence to ask—but I suppose *you* wouldn't do something of the sort, would you?"

Maud Smith turned two most bewildering eyes upon him.

"I would gladly if I could," she replied, with beautiful earnestness, "but Nita has so many times said th—that—— but it's no good to hurt your feelings any more! . . . However I might *try*—er—come in to tea at my flat next Thursday, and let's talk it over!" she concluded spontaneously.

"Thanks, awfully! I'll be delighted—a quarter to four? (I'll jot it down on my cuff.)

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You mustn't think, of course, Mrs. Smith, that I'm a willow-wearer—what! Everyone gets over everything in time!"

And as Hugh Willerby concluded this last sentence, which he vaguely hoped might sound like an epigram, he felt something had been done to restore his shattered pride.

He wouldn't like this jolly little woman to look upon him as a sort of whining schoolboy—in fact, perhaps, he'd given himself away too much already!—so he must make an effort at cheeriness.

But as Mrs. Smith was getting keener and keener on the idea of this nice-looking young man giving himself away altogether (to *her*), she very definitely made up her mind that before she would bring about a meeting between these parted lovers, she'd—she'd—why, she'd confess her real age last birthday!

"I'll gently drop Nita, if I can," she mused, as she drove back to her own flat. "It would be a good plan to see her *once* more and throw out various hints about Hugh's mended heart. Then, after that, I'll forget to answer her letters, and all that sort of thing."

And when Mrs. Smith reached her lonely flat (how specially lonely it seemed to-night, somehow! Ah-h-h-h!), she found that circumstance was playing up to her hand in a most convenient manner.

On the mantelpiece stood a letter, which ran as follows:

Field House, Oxbury.

DEAREST MAUD,

Possibly I'm running up to shop on the 9th and 10th; if I do, may I come in to tea with you one of those days? Don't put anything off, because, after all, I may say I'll come, and not turn up—so don't be surprised! You know what a petticoated weathercock I am, don't you?

Just send a postcard saying if either day I *mustn't* come—that's all I want to know.

With love, and in a hurry,

Yours ever,

NITA.

P.S.—Do you ever see anything of H.W.? I'm told he's very cheerful. You might let me know—this is only curiosity, not interest.

Mrs. Smith read the letter over twice, and puckered up her white forehead.

The 9th and 10th! When *were* the 9th and 10th?

She never troubled anything about dates, and the next month was well under way before she knew the last had gone.

The 9th and 10th?—of May, she supposed. This was May, wasn't it? Oh! yes, she knew it was—but the 9th and 10th?

"People who date their letters and know all about 'insts' and 'proxes' and 'ults' must have been born with the souls of solicitors' clerks!" she exclaimed pettishly. "Now, how can I find out about the 9th and 10th?"

For a moment or two Mrs. Smith reflected. Then suddenly she remembered that cook always kept a calendar hanging up in the kitchen, and that, the servants being in bed, she could invade her own domestic regions without feeling presumptuous.

Having arrived at this decision, Mrs. Smith gathered up her frou-frouing skirts, tripped over to the kitchen, switched on the electric light, and at once crossed to a corner near the gas-stove where hung a grease-spotted calendar, flanked on either side by picture postcards, fastened on to the wall with pins (cook had a decorative soul).

Now what was the month? May, of course!

Mrs. Smith bent forward, ran her smallest finger along the margin of a calendar, and began at the 6th.

6 S. 3rd Sunday after Easter.
7 M. Royal Academy opens.
8 T. Lord Rosebery born 1847.
9 W. Half-quarter day.
10 Th. Indian Mutiny began 1857.

Heavens, the 10th was THURSDAY! And on Thursday Hugh Willerby was coming to tea!

Mrs. Smith quite gasped at what she nearly might have done!

If it hadn't been for cook's good, useful, greasy calendar she might have given Nita permission to call on the very day Hugh was expected to tea! And then—well, if once they met again, the change from "Smith" to "Willerby" would never be effected! (Nita was *so* artful!)

Having found out all that it was necessary to know, Mrs. Smith hurried back to the dining-room and wrote a post-card.

"Come on 9th by all means—just delighted to see you—but please *not on 10th. Fully engaged 10th, and can't see anyone.* Shall expect you 9th if I see you, but don't bother to write if you can't turn up. Should be at home anyhow, so it doesn't matter. Fondest love and yearning for a chat—M. Remember 9th, NOT 10th.

When Mrs. Smith had directed this card and given it to the porter in time to catch the midnight mail, she repaired to bed, intending to lie and think hard before allowing herself to fall asleep.

She had quite a lot to think about—nice profiles, rebounding hearts, and widows' wedding dresses——

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Such a pity that widows couldn't be married in white! But, never mind. That very newest shade of grey was so pale that it looked nearly as bridal, and quite as becoming.

Alexia should make the things—very little *lingerie* would be required—she had three dozen of everything untouched, and fortunately all the marking was in cotton and not ink—it could easily be picked out: "*At St. Faith's Church, Maud Daphne, widow of John Smith, to Hugh Ernest Leonard Willerby.*" *Train-de-luxe* Paris to Mentone — no, Switzerland or Norway in July. Good month July—very good mon——

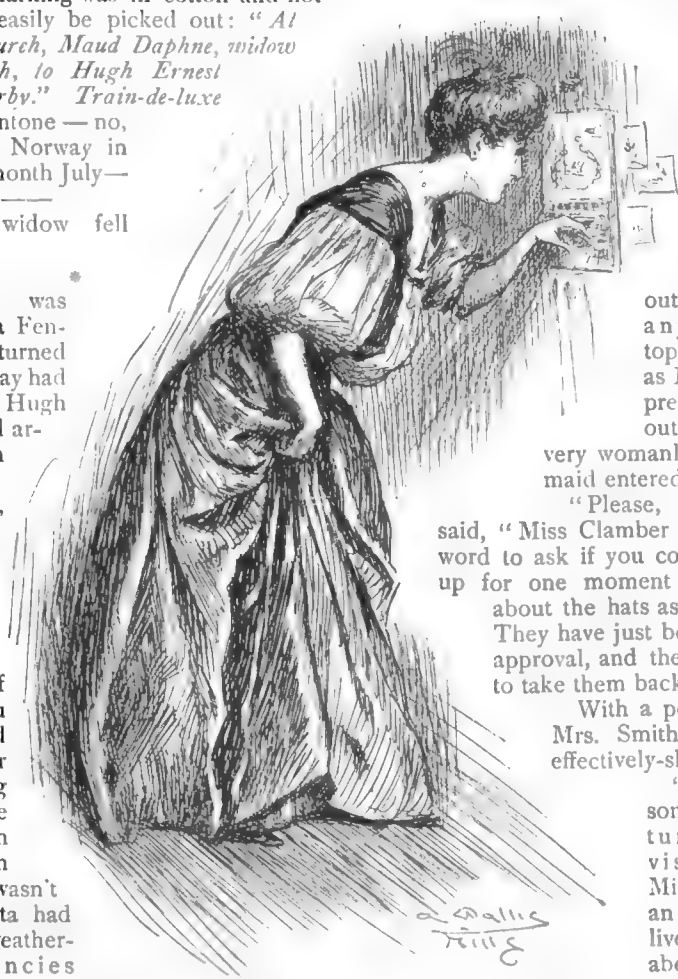
And the widow fell asleep.

* * *

Wednesday was over, and Nita Fenning hadn't turned up, but Thursday had come, and Hugh Willerby would arrive in less than ten minutes!

On the whole, thought Mrs. Smith, as she arranged a bunch of violets among the perfumed laces of her Watteau tea-gown, and put one or two refining touches to the silver-laden tea-table — on the whole she wasn't sorry that Nita had asserted her weather-cock tendencies by not turning up on the 9th, because it might have made her (Maud) feel the least, smallest bit of a traitor when Hugh arrived this afternoon.

Not that there would have been any need to tell him of his ex-*fiancée's* visit, of course, but—but—well, for anyone who so prided herself upon the openness and candour of her disposition, the situation might have been uncongenial, that's all.



Heavens, the 10th was THURSDAY! And on Thursday Hugh Willerby was coming to tea!

Yes—Mrs. Smith was decidedly glad that her dearest friend had not "come up to shop"!

Punctually at 3.45 the front door bell received a firm pressure from one big thumb, and as Mrs. Smith leant back her chin, and without rising held out one hand to greet her caller, she more than ever made up her mind to get what she wanted.

Hugh Willerby's presence seemed to bring into her life everything that was needed.

For five minutes they chatted without touching on any personal topics. Then, just as Mrs. Smith was preparing to pour out tea and to be very womanly, the parlour-maid entered the room.

"Please, madam," she said, "Miss Clamber has sent down word to ask if you could kindly run up for one moment to advise her about the hats as you promised. They have just been brought on approval, and the boy is waiting to take them back."

With a petulant gesture Mrs. Smith stamped one effectively-shod foot.

"Oh it *is* tiresome!" she cried, turning to her visitor. "This Miss Clamber is an old maid who lives in the flat above, and who is tied to the sofa because of a sprained ankle. She is an awful nuisance, but is so awfully kind in letting me use her 'phone and taking care of Fluffball when I go away, that I like to do what I can. Would you think me *very* rude if I rushed up for *one* second and looked at her silly hats? Needless to say—*quite* needless!—I won't be longer.'

"Of course—er—by all means go, Mrs. Smith! Poor lady! I—er—wouldn't spoil

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"Oh! I am so, so, *so* sorry"—she began . . . as she opened the door. I simply couldn't get away, and—*Oh!*"

the selection of her—er—caps—er—headgear for worlds! I shall be quite all right with this pile of—er—magazines and things," replied Hugh, groping for words as usual in his nice, inane, well-bred manner.

"Thank you *so* much. You *are* a tolerant man!" And with one flashed smile Mrs. Smith left the room and hurried up to No. 6, intending to be back again before Hugh had time to read half a column of the very largest type.

But, in common with many other intentions, this one of Mrs. Smith's was doomed to frustration, because, by the time she had persuaded Miss Clamber that a violet toque with an emerald plume was more *chic* than a blue picture hat raised on a bandeau of pink roses, exactly one quarter of an hour had elapsed.

"What a bad beginning! I must be extra *extra* to put this right!" was Maud's reflection as she ran down the main staircase, rang her own bell and dashed across to the drawing-room without observing that her deliberate parlourmaid was endeavouring to make a remark.

"Oh! I am so, so, *so* sorry——" she began, putting much pleading and many italics into her tones as she opened the door. "I simply couldn't get away, and—*Oh!*"

The last exclamation was involuntary and anguished, because as Mrs. Smith halted to utter it, two figures, which in the dimly-shaded light had almost seemed merged into one, sprang apart.

"Oh! Maudie!" cried a brown-haired girl, with youth in her eyes and gladness in her voice, "you are the dearest, bad-est, artful-est person I know! *This* is why I was so specially commanded to come on the 9th! I call it an absolute trap—but——but——" (with one glance at the big person in the background) "I——I don't think I mind being caught!"

"I—er—told you, Mrs. Smith, it would come right, if I—er—could only explain, didn't I?" said Hugh, whose happiness was more obtrusive than his good breeding just at

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that particular moment. "You were er—er—well, a brick—to fix things up! I never—er—thought when I mentioned the matter, don't you know—that—er—things would be all right by this time. We—er—*I*, I mean—can't thank you enough!"

"I'm not going to try—I'm just going to *hug* you!"

And with this Miss Fenning carried out her threat, much to the detriment of the widow's tea-gown.

* * * * *

When, a couple of hours later, two people were bowling off to paradise in a very ordinary hansom cab, Mrs. Smith went into the kitchen, for once omitting to be afraid of the cook.

Could she have mistaken the dates?

No, there it was plain as it had been before!

9 W. Half-quarter day.

10 Th. Indian Mutiny began 1857——

"It isn't no good looking at that, madam," observed cook, speaking from the region of the stock-pot. "I only keep it up there for ornayment, not for use. It's last year's almynack!"

Mrs. Smith left the kitchen and at once looked out a floral calendar, which she suddenly remembered her late husband's eldest aunt had sent at Christmas.

She looked at the "May" disc, surrounded by an irritating wreath of hawthorns.

"W. 8."

"Th. 9."

"F. 10."

Mrs. Smith (who will never be Willerby) turned away and said—something!

She never now omits to date her letters, and on each 31st of December personally destroys all old calendars before placing one for the coming year in every room.

MY FRIEND JONES.

Jones is so modest and so shy.
Some singers will not sing their songs
Except for gold to mighty throngs;
But Jones will always sing to you
When he can find a friend or two
To listen to his phrases.
His song is in the key of "I";
He doesn't wait to be encored,
For Jones, you see, is never bored
With—singing his own praises.

Jones shines at all athletic sports.
He says he can't be called a crock
At battledore and shuttlecock;
At bowls he fears no foe.
I hear all sorts of strange reports
Of feats of his on tennis-courts.
In fact he has a world-wide fame
At every kind of manly game.
But he excels (so rumour tells)
At—drawing the long bow.

A great musician, too, is Jones.
He'll toot the flute, or bang the drum,
Upon the piano he can strum
(It's grand to hear him thump it).
And from the banjo or the bones
He draws the most delicious tones.
He plays with elegance and ease
On any instrument you please.
But where he beats us all by streets
Is—blowing his own trumpet.

Jones is a splendid business man.
Though he has private means, you know,
He's full of energy, and so
Has not a leisure minute.
If you are doubtful where to stay
During your summer holiday,
Jones will devise some hare-brained plan.
Upon one thing you can rely:
If any cook prepares a pie,
He'll have a finger in it.

Jones is the man to criticise;
No faults escape his eagle eyes.
No brewer brews, no coachman drives,
No chauffeur chauffs, no diver dives
So well as Jones; and he can bake
Far better than the baker.
So it would cause me no surprise
If, when he dies, his corpse should rise
Up from the coffin where it lies
And—blame the undertaker!

W. L. Donaldson.

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MR. —HIS PAGES.

Be our August calm or gusty,
In his old familiar way
"Mr. X," the tried, the trusty,
Still will have his little say:
If you notice Jack and Gwennie
Floating in a trim canoe,
You may bet a modest penny
"Mr. X" is with them, too.

He it is who, bright and merry,
Makes them shout with youthful glee,
Jack provides the cream and berry,
"Mr. X" the repar-tea.
Have you never smiled for ages?
Are you full of cares that vex?
Read his pair of cheerful pages
And be cured by "Mr. X."

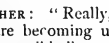
Puzzle Penknives, Puzzle Purses, or Packs of ROYAL Playing Cards, will be given as prizes to readers who forward new puzzles, problems, or other tricks which are inserted in this feature. Any readers communicating with "Mr. X," and wishing for a reply should inclose a stamped, addressed envelope. All letters should be addressed to "Mr. X" (care of THE ROYAL MAGAZINE), 18 Henrietta Street, London, W.C.

A SCIENTIFIC FACT.

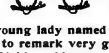
LITTLE ARTHUR: "I have noticed that whenever it rains the statue in the market-place gets smaller, mother. It is a strange thing."

HIS MOTHER: "Really, Arthur, I am afraid you are becoming untruthful. What you say is impossible."

LITTLE ARTHUR (much hurt): "I beg your pardon, mother! When it rains, the statue naturally becomes a mere statuette (statue wet)."



A certain young lady named Cholmondeley
Was heard to remark very gloimondeley:
"Dick's told me again
I am desperately plain!
Ah, me! how I wish I were colmondeley!"



A FOWL CATCH.

STIGGINS: "Look here, my lad, can you tell me what it is that walks about a farmyard on two legs, is covered with feathers, and barks like a dog?"

WIGGINS (furrowing his brow): "Why—er—no, I can't. What is it?"

STIGGINS: "You *are* dull. A hen, of course."

WIGGINS: "But a hen doesn't bark."

STIGGINS: "No; I just put that in to make it a bit harder."

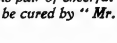
(*Exit hurriedly.*)

OBVIOUS.

HINKS: "If two black men ate a white man, what would be their telephone number?"

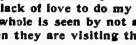
BINKS: "I don't know; I hate these wretched riddles."

HINKS: "Don't get angry. 281 (two ate one) of course. Quite simple."



CHARADE.

My first is at Chicago found,
And all may plainly see
(What, after all, is scarcely strange)
My second isn't me.
Many a maiden has preferred
For lack of love to do my third.
My whole is seen by not a few
When they are visiting the Zoo.



A THOUGHT-READING TRICK.

This trick never fails to create amusement if performed before a room full of people—the more the better.

Ask a lady to write a sentence on a piece of paper. She must hand this round and let everyone read it except yourself. Then request her to fold it up and place it on the floor, and get one of the men present to put his foot on it. After thinking deeply for a few minutes, assume a bright smile, and say to the owner of the foot:

"You wish me to tell you what is on that piece of paper?"

When he replies "Yes," answer "Your foot," and make for the door.

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A Nightmare of a Catch.

Oaks: "What is the difference between an egg and a mare?"

Elms: "Dunno."

Oaks: "Why, stupid, one is an e-g-g, of course."

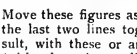
Elms: "Well?"

Oaks: "Well, the other is a she-gee-gee."

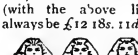
L s. d.

Write down any sum of pounds, shillings, and pence, with these limitations, that the pounds are not to be more than eleven, and the pence are to be less than the pounds. Thus:

£	s	d.	
11	19	10	
			Then transpose the pounds and pence, leave the shillings where they are and
10	19	11	subtract the less from the greater.
0	19	11	Move these figures as before, and add
11	19	0	the last two lines together. The result, with these or any other figures (with the above limitations) will
12	18	11	always be £12 18s. 11d. Try it and see!



What is the difference between a champion oarsman and a policeman?
One is a crack sculler, the other is a skull cracker.

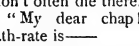


Where to Live.

Jones: "They say London is unhealthy, yet people don't often die there."

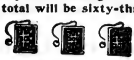
Brown: "My dear chap! Why, the monthly death-rate is——"

Jones (interrupting): "All the same, Brown, people only die once in London, the same as they do in other places."



A Birthday Baffler.

I am twice the age you were
When I was the age you are;
When you are the age I be
Our total will be sixty-three.



Appalling News.

Binns: "Have you heard of the terrible tragedy in our street?"

Minns: "No! How dreadful! What was it?"

Binns: "A lease has just expired!"

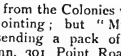
"Grapes."

"Mr. X" offered two packs of Royal playing cards and two puzzle penknives to the readers who made what was in his opinion the best list of words out of the letters contained in the word "grapes." By many hundreds of entries it was easily the most popular competition "Mr. X" has ever held, and having decided it he is imploring the Editor to let him go away for a rest cure to some spot where he will never see a dictionary. So large a proportion of readers seem to have understood "Mr. X" to mean that any six-letter word might be used as the "basis," that he has divided the competition prizes amongst the "grapers" and the "others."

The winning "grapers" are: Mr. M. W. Amberg, 113 Church Street, Lower Edmonton, Middlesex, who made 71 words; and Miss E. Hughes-Hughes, 29 Buckingham Road, Aylesbury (63). Prizes in the "others" class go to Mr. W. Stock, Norton Lodge, Graham Road, Weston-super-Mare, who made 98 words out of "repast"; and Mr. E. R Shaw, Hurstcroft, London Road, Twickenham, for 81 words out of "pastel." Two other competitors made 81 words out of "tapers" and "repast" respectively; "Mr. X," as he gave warning, desired the Editor, blindfolded, to pick the winner, and out came Mr. Shaw's list.

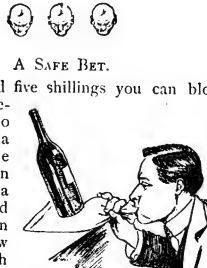
The entries from the Colonies were, on the whole, rather disappointing; but "Mr. X" has much pleasure in sending a pack of cards to Mr. W. Ormonde Venn, 301 Point Road, Durban, Natal, for his 55 words from "grapes."

Even the winning lists were considerably cut down—pruned of obsolete and unheard-of words.



A Safe Bet.

Bet a friend five shillings you can blow over a wine-bottle. To do this, place a fairly large paper bag on the end of a table, and stand the bottle on the bag. Blow into the mouth of the bag, and as it fills out it will upset the wine-bottle. You may now collect the five shillings.



ANSWERS.

Charade Solution: Porcupine.
A Birthday Baffler: 28 and 21.

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The Story of an Amazing Plot.

"I TELL you, old man, it's the greatest thing the world has ever seen; it will revolutionise war; it will alter the whole of civilised life. Oh, chaff away—I like it; but I'm right—wait and see!"

The speaker was Lieut. Charles Dean, of the Sappers, and he was slowly riding back to Gibraltar after a day with the world-famed Calpe Hunt. His companion was his intimate friend Meredith, a subaltern in the Hereford Rangers. His particular duty on the grand old "Rock" was the care of the new aeroplane which had only recently been installed as a part of the defences of the fortress.

His enthusiasm for his machine was, as it ought to be, unbounded. In fact, it was quite a joke in the garrison. Once get him on his hobby—it was not hard to draw him out—and he would hold forth for hours on the merits of the invention, its almost supernatural powers, its speed, the mysterious ease with which it could be handled, its accuracy of steerage, and so on. But no one could ever succeed in getting the least scrap of information from him about the actual details of his machine, how it worked, or what the principle was. It was held to be a strict secret by the authorities, and he was not going to betray the trust, even to his best friend.

"Why, I expect we shall see you come to the meet one day soon on your beloved aeroplane," laughed Meredith; "it ought to be a good fencer!"

"If I did, I expect I could show you a line of country which very few could follow," he replied.

"I wish you would show me something of the working of the 'plane.' I have never even seen it close at hand."

"Can't, old chap—sorry—I daren't. I can't even let anyone put his nose inside the shed. The key never leaves me night or day."

The season that winter was a very gay one at Gibraltar, and the hotels were full to overflowing. Dances, dinners, picnics, and tea-parties allowed no one to feel dull on the Rock. An enterprising Spaniard, too, had recently started a fast motor-boat for hire, and trips in the Bay were all the rage.

Among the visitors to the Rock that winter were the Rev. Stephen Irwin and his daughter,

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Mabel. The kindly, grey-haired old clergyman soon won all hearts by his simple, hearty friendliness. As for Miss Mabel, her pretty face and laughing eyes worked much havoc amongst the subalterns, and even majors and captains vied with one another in their efforts to court her favour. Though Mr. Irwin never danced himself, he was always ready to chaperon his daughter. In the messes he was always welcome, for he played a good hand at bridge. His hobby was that of a naturalist, and his age was not too great to prevent his spending most of the days collecting butterflies, beetles, and plants on the upper slopes of the famous Rock.

Dean was, of course, acquainted with the Irwins, and he soon became one of Miss Mabel's warmest admirers. As time passed on it became clear that he ranked in her estimation as first favourite. Their chief amusement at this time was to escort old Mr. Irwin to the upper part of the Rock, and assist him in his naturalist's pursuits. At times, while he went further afield in chase of some specimen, the young couple would sit drinking in the air, admiring the view, and watching the steamers come and go.

One afternoon, as they were sitting idly watching the arrival of a big P. & O. liner, and enjoying the glorious panorama of Gibraltar Bay and the Spanish mountains, Mabel began teasing Dean about his aeroplane. "Is it true, Mr. Dean, that you take the key of the shed to bed with you?"

"Quite true, Miss Irwin, it never leaves me."

"I really can't believe it. Have you got it now?"

"Of course I have."

"Do let me see it, just to prove your words!"

With a little hesitation Dean produced a ring holding two keys—a large and a small one.

"What is the other one?" asked Mabel inquisitively.

Dean was unwilling to say any more about it, but Mabel persisted.

"After all," he thought, "she is only a child, knows nothing of these things, and really there's more red-tape than anything else in all this secrecy. By Jove, she is awfully pretty!"

So he told her that the smaller key was that of a box fixed in the aero-shed, which held all the plans, diagrams, and calculations necessary for constructing and working the "p'ane."

"How uninteresting; dry old diagrams! I hoped it would be something far more exciting," she replied. "Come, it's time we were getting home. Where's father got to?"

So the time passed on, and the lovers, for such they had now obviously become, enjoyed no one's society so much as their own, and Mabel soon let all other admirers know that her choice had not lighted upon them. The winter had passed, the spring was growing into summer, and the days were now becoming too hot to make "rock-scrambling" agreeable.

The Irwins still remained at Gibraltar. Mr. Irwin declared that the climate suited him so well that he would make no move until the summer heat drove him away. One evening, after a very sultry afternoon, Mabel proposed a moonlight walk "up the Rock," and asked Dean to take them. But Dean pointed out to them that "residents' passes" only held good up to "first gun-fire" each evening, at which time all the gates of the fortress were closed.

Mabel made a pretty little pout. "Oh, dear, it is getting so stuffy now! Don't you think you could get us permission to go up in the evenings? It would be delightful!"

Dean had some misgivings about the red-tapey ideas of the authorities, but promised to do his best. Next morning he interviewed a staff officer about the matter. The latter made some demur at first, but at length gave in.

"However, Mr. Dean, I am making a very unusual exception on their behalf, as a special favour to you. They are particular friends of yours;" (here his eye twinkled mischievously) "you must accompany them whenever they make use of the privilege of going up the Rock after gun-fire, and you will be held entirely responsible for them."

"Very good, sir," replied Dean, as he saluted, and went out, pass in hand. "More red tape!" he said to himself, laughing at the official manner of the staff officer. "I have got to be responsible, have I? My own darling, I want to be responsible for you all my life!"

That same evening they took advantage of their new privilege, and after dinner made their way easily to the top of the ridge, where, sitting on a comfortable spot, they could enjoy the cool breeze coming over from the eastern side.

It was a lovely moonlight night, and the Bay reflected the silvery rays like a mirror. As they sat there a great battleship came in from the Straits, slowly approached the

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harbour, and finally came to anchor with that majestic dignity which always characterises a huge war vessel. Signals twinkled from the masthead. Two or three steam-launches put off and went alongside. The outline of the great floating fort was softened by the moonlight.

"I think we could see it better further on. Miss Irwin, will you come a little way along the path?"

They strolled off together, and then came the opportunity Dean had been longing for. With the moonlight shining down upon the great Fortress, Dean told Mabel of his love for her, and when they returned to her father she had promised to be his wife.

Next day the news of the engagement spread rapidly, and Dean received the heartiest congratulations on all sides. Mabel was radiant with happiness—Dean was full of triumph, and Mr. Irwin, too, appeared equally delighted. Jocular people asked if the happy pair would leave for the honeymoon on the aeroplane!

"Afraid it will only hold one," Dean answered.

"Hullo! Be careful, old chap! You're letting out secrets! You must have it very badly this time! If you're so thoughtless you'll be giving the whole thing away soon! Pull yourself together!"

And with such chaff they rallied the lovers. But all went well, and now of course the moonlight walks were more regular than ever.

One night, when they had been engaged about a fortnight, they went their usual evening walk. There was no moon now, but they made their way to the top, and sat enjoying the still, cool air, lost in admiration of the myriad host of stars which looked down upon them.

They sat, as lovers will, close together, their arms around one another, her head resting trustfully on his shoulder. They were not far from Dean's aero-shed. Suddenly Mabel complained of feeling unwell—giddiness, sickness, and heart palpitation—the last of which quickly grew worse, till the man became seriously alarmed, for it was clear she had a bad attack of the heart.

The distress of the lover was only equalled by that of the father. "My poor child! I can't understand it; she has never had anything like this before," was all he could say.

At length she fainted dead away.

"Oh, my darling!" moaned Dean, who seemed for the moment to have lost his nerve. "What shall we do?"

"You must go down for a doctor," said Mr. Irwin, who had all his wits about him. "I am too old to go fast, and do not know the paths so well as you do. I must stay here with Mabel."

Dean was very loth to leave his sweetheart, but common sense prevailed. Racked with anxiety, he hurried down the hill as fast as the darkness would allow him. Fortunately he knew thoroughly every turn of the winding paths. Reaching the town, he went at once to the night quarters of the medical officer on duty, knowing that he would be in uniform, while no civilian practitioner would be allowed to pass through the gates in plain clothes at that hour.

The medical officer was by no means pleased at the prospect of a tramp up the Rock so late. He could not leave his quarters, he had no power to attend on civilians, he said, to all of which Dean turned a deaf ear. "Man," he exclaimed, "Miss Irwin may be dying—look alive!"

Seeing the case was really serious, Major Cross got up and quickly went with Dean to the gates. Here a new difficulty presented itself. The sentry at the gate let Major Cross through, being in uniform, but not Dean, who was in plain clothes, having dined with the Irwins at their hotel. Of course, he remembered; the pass he had obtained was worded "Admit Rev. S. and Miss Irwin, if accompanied by Lieut. Dean, R.E." So he had not troubled to bring his own pass, and the other was in Mr. Irwin's pocket.

"But it's a matter of life and death!" he shouted.

"Very sorry, sir; it's my orders."

"Never mind, Dean," said the doctor kindly, seeing that he was losing his head; "I'll go on; you must run home and get your pass, and try to catch me up, and show me where they are."

"Near my aero-shed," he cried, as he turned to go.

There was no help for it, He tore home, denouncing red tape, snatched up his pass, and breathlessly pounded up the steep paths leading to the summit. When he reached the top he found Major Cross waiting for him.

"Are you sure this is where they were? I can see nothing of them," he said.

"Certain," replied Dean; "this is the very spot."

They searched the surroundings, but could not see them; they shouted, but there was no reply. The Irwins were nowhere to be found!

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At length she fainted dead away.

"It is quite clear to me," said the Major. "Miss Irwin has recovered, and they have gone down by the other path. You lovesick boys aren't to be trusted. Your sweetheart gets a trifling spasm, the result of a chill or indigestion, and you will have it she is a goner! Don't bring me on a fool's errand like this again!" And before Dean could make any reply he strode off into the darkness.

It was some moments before Dean could recover himself. "I can't make it out," he said to himself. "If she had got better her father might have helped her slowly along; but they would certainly have taken the path we came by."

He stood uncertain for some minutes. "Better go back to their hotel, I suppose." He wandered slowly on, pondering over the matter, until he came to his aero-shed. "Think I'll have a look round now I'm here. If she is so much better there's no need to hurry," he said, a little resentfully.

He went up to the door, and mechanically put his hand to his pocket for the key, but, to his surprise, the door was not fastened! Next moment he found his keys were not in his pocket! "Surely I can't have forgotten them! And how on earth comes the door to be open?"

Suddenly a terrible suspicion crossed his mind. He sprang in and switched on the electric light. There, facing him, was the strong box, standing open, the keys in the lock, as empty as the day it was made! The book of plans and diagrams was gone!

In a flash he grasped the full horror of the situation. A cold perspiration broke over his brow and ran down his cheeks. These two were *spies*, the paid emissaries of some foreign power! He had been befooled! They had come out to Gibraltar with the express purpose of getting those plans!

He saw it all—the girl's preference for himself, the walks up the Rock, the evening pass, the queries about the keys, the—Heavens, she was a common pickpocket! As he thought, his love for her vanished in a moment. The plans were even now on their way to some foreign capital, giving the whole knowledge necessary to make and use the wonderful secret machine!

And then the words of the staff officer came to his mind with startling clearness: "You, Mr. Dean, will be held entirely responsible!" What an awful responsibility!

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His folly had betrayed his country! His first impulse was to throw himself over the precipitous cliffs on the eastern side of the Rock. But a saner counsel prevailed. There was not a moment to be lost. He must recover those plans at all costs; he must follow the Irwins to the world's end if necessary; he must save his country and his own honour at the same time!

His presence of mind had now quite returned to him. He tore down the hill, not forgetting to lock up the shed. He must prevent the Irwins leaving Gibraltar if possible. At this hour they could only leave by sea, all gates being closed. So he went straight to the Waterport.

"Have an English lady and gentleman taken a boat lately?" he gasped to the policeman on duty. "Yes, sir," he replied, "about half-an-hour ago. An old gentleman, but walking very sturdy. They said as they was going a hevening trip in the Bay, and would soon be back. They had a big packet with them, and they went in the motor-boat."

The motor-boat! That, too, was probably part of the plot! Its speed, seaworthiness, and endurance would enable it to reach any port in Europe. Oh, Heavens! What could he do? Should he arouse the Governor? Could he give chase in a torpedo-boat? None had steam up, and of course red tape intervened. He groaned in desperation.

Suddenly, in this terrible moment of stress, a new thought came to him. He would tell no one. He, and he alone, would redeem his folly, would save his country and retrieve his honour! Back, back up hill he pounded, breathlessly, but ever urged on by those pregnant words—"*you* are responsible!"

On reaching his aero-shed once more, he carefully looked his machine over. It was in perfect order. He made a few careful adjustments, saw to his compressed air, wound up some springs, noted the thermometer and barometer readings, the force and direction of the wind, and the tide. He then saw that his gun-cotton charges were ready in position. Finally, strapping on his revolver, he threw open the big swing doors which faced outwards, took his seat on the "plane," gathered into his hand the cords which controlled the various fans and wings, and pulled a lever.

There was a hissing sound as of compressed air forcing a piston, the whirring of a revolving fan, and the great aeroplane began to move along a short inclined way, slowly at first, but quickly gathering speed, until, with spreading wings, it shot forth from the Rock out into mid-air in the darkness of the night!

While panting up the hilly path, Dean had not been idle. He had thought out his plans for what might appear a wild-goose chase. It was now long past midnight; in another two hours or so the sun would be rising. It was a new moon, and the consequent spring tides would cause a strong tidal current to set eastwards through the Straits. Added to this a sharp west wind was blowing. This made him sure that Irwin would not attempt to force a passage westwards through the Straits in the teeth of wind and tide. To get a good start at first was all-important to him.

So after flying a few hundred yards straight out to get clear of the Rock, and to make sure of his equilibrium, Dean circled to the left, rose a little, and headed due east, above Windmill Hill, and out over the open waters of the Mediterranean.

What a chase it was! It was not without some excitement and a sense of humour that he clenched his jaws in the grim determination to do his duty or die in the attempt! Here was he, in evening dress with a revolver, on a new and almost untried flying-machine, rapidly getting further and further from land on a dark night, in chase of a vessel going in a direction he could only surmise! If only he knew whither it was bound! He tried to think out its possible destination.

The inhospitable African coast was out of the question. Spain, owing to the *rapprochement* caused by King Alfonso's marriage to an English princess, seemed most unlikely; we were on good terms now with both France and Italy; Russia was in no condition yet to embark on such an enterprise as this—ah! he had it, the new German base in Asia Minor, recently seized by the Kaiser's ships in spite of half-hearted protests by our Government at home!

Well, it was going to be a long chase and a stern chase, but as long as he could hold out he would keep it up!

The "plane" sailed splendidly; going with the wind its speed rose to more than forty miles an hour. It was under perfect control.

On, on he went! Hour after hour his beloved aero answered proudly to the call like a thing of life. The dawn brightened, the sun rose, and daylight now revealed an unbroken horizon of sea. He remembered to wind his watch, he noted his compass

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direction and made a few calculations. On! still on! The freshening wind now carried him at a speed which could not be less than sixty miles an hour. He judged his height to be about 500 feet. He passed a few tramp steamers, and wondered if they noticed him.

He knew, if only he were going in the right direction, that he must be rapidly overhauling his prey. Fast might be the Irwins' boat, but his aero was faster. He scanned the horizon in all directions, but nothing could he see. On! on!

It is nearly midday. He will not admit to himself that he is beginning to feel fatigued. Ah! what is that speck? Surely only a tramp; others had deceived him before. No, he would overtake a tramp quicker—it is—*it is*—can he believe his eyes—it is the motor-boat, forging due east at her utmost speed, her bows throwing up a huge wave, a long track trailing out behind! He breathes a word of thanks to Heaven, sets his face more determinedly than ever, and—looks to his gun-cotton charges!

He is quickly overtaking the boat, and with his field-glasses he can see that those on board have seen him and are watching his movements. He says to himself that they little expected such a pursuit as this!

He can now recognise their faces—surely that hearty man of forty or so cannot be the genial old parson—his father-in-law elect? At that last thought he ground his teeth and gripped his cords the tighter. No love had he now for the girl who had befooled, who would have ruined him. He could see her, too, crouching on the deck and watching him anxiously, but not even would her presence deter him from his purpose.

He put out his hand to hurl a gun-cotton charge, when suddenly the motor-boat swerved off.

The wind had dropped, but he would soon overtake them now. He put out his hand to hurl a gun-cotton charge, when suddenly the motor-boat swerved off at an angle, only avoiding a capsize by a hair's-breadth

"Ah, you want me to play greyhound to your hare, do you? You little know the powers of my aero!"

He pulled his cords and the great machine swept round at once, turning almost on its side. It righted quickly, and Dean found that the motor had doubled again. He

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followed suit, and an exciting hunt ensued, doubling and turning and dodging in every direction. It was necessary for him to get vertically over the boat in order to drop a gun-cotton charge into her. The strain was telling on him, but he was gradually getting closer. It could not last much longer now, this strange contest!

All at once he saw a fresh move—the occupants of the boat had hoisted the German naval ensign! For a moment he flinched; to attack the boat would now be an act of war! Dare he do it? What might be the consequences?

"Pshaw! It's an action of despair—they are trying to bluff me! Besides, the German Government would certainly repudiate them.'

In reply he pulled a cord, and the Union Jack fluttered out behind his machine, breathing defiance of the Kaiser and all his wiles!

The chase continued, and Dean felt that he could not keep it up much longer. Then a shot rang out, and a bullet whizzed past him! He was positively glad! "Hurrah! The first act of war is on their side! I have no qualms now! And, unless they hit me, they can't injure my plane with rifle fire. The bullets will merely go through the wings!"

The fight was now at close quarters. Dean was only a few yards above the sea-level, and there they turned and doubled and twisted like maddened animals. The boat's occupants were clearly in a state of desperation. At last, just as Dean began to feel his strength deserting him, he saw the motor-boat sheer beneath him! Quick as lightning he hurled the charge, at the same time swerving aside and rising sharply in the air. There was a deafening report. At that moment a sudden gust of wind demanded all his attention. When he was able to look, not a sign of the boat nor its occupants was to be seen, except a slight eddy ruffling the waters!

With a gasp of "Thank God!" he brought the plane to a standstill and let it sink, limp and helpless, on to the surface of the sea. Then, released from the terrible strain, his senses gave way, and he collapsed insensible on the framework of his floating plane.

* * * * *

An hour later a cruiser on the way home from Malta picked him up. The strain had been too great; he could only babble incoherently. But by the time the vessel reached Gibraltar he was sufficiently recovered to give a fairly clear account of what had occurred. His action was fully justified by the authorities there. He was given six months' sick leave to recover his health, for his nerves were completely shattered. The whole affair was, for obvious reasons, hushed up, and in Gibraltar it was generally supposed that he had taken out his plane at night, having gone a bit aero mad. Soon after his leave was up he was rewarded with a good staff appointment at headquarters.

Needless to say, the German Government never made any claim in regard to the motor-boat, nor was its loss ever published in the German official lists.

SARCASM BY THE SEA.

Said the youth with the soulful Trilby hat,
And the hair that drooped behind:
"I came down here by the sad sea waves
And fled from the city's grind
To crave of Nature the boon of rest—
Of rest, and of peace of mind."

Said the nymph with the pea-green parasol
And a fund of humour blest:
"I'm glad to note you're progressing towards
The achievement of your quest,
For I see you've obtained the piece of mind
When do you expect the rest?"

Stuart Furniss.

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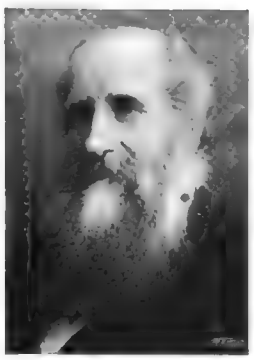

Photo Lang Sims.
Mr. G. W. Linnecar.

SURVIVORS' TALES OF GREAT EVENTS

No. XXXI.—THE LOSS OF THE *PRINCESS ALICE.*

FROM THE NARRATIVE OF MR. G. W. LINNECAR.

AS TOLD TO WALTER WOOD.

So sudden was the loss of the *Princess Alice*, an iron saloon steamer, belonging to the London Steamboat Company, so terrible the loss of life, that the disaster is almost unparalleled. On Tuesday, September 3rd, 1878, the *Princess Alice* was returning to London from Sheerness, with some 900 persons on board, mostly women and children. Just before eight o'clock, when about a mile below Woolwich Arsenal, she collided with the *Bywell Castle*, a screw steamer. She sank immediately, and about 700 of the passengers perished. At first it was held that both vessels were to blame, but finally it was decided that the *Princess Alice* was solely at fault. Mr. G. W. Linnecar, who tells the story, is known as the "Sailor Preacher," from the fact that he spent many years at sea in early life. He is now the Superintendent of the Mansion House Mission Chapel, Camberwell.

TRIFLES light as air affect our destiny. I have seen enough of life in all parts of the world to know that. It was the merest trifle which made me a passenger in the *Princess Alice* on that last terrible trip of hers when she sank with the suddenness of the *Royal George*, and carried with her almost as many souls.

I had settled down to shore life after fourteen years at sea, and was studying at Spurgeon's College for the ministry. Book learning was little in my line—how could it be to a wildish young sailorman?—and I was run down and badly in need of a little change of air and rest. I am talking now of nearly thirty years ago, but even then the ordinary London resident who wished for a change naturally turned his attention to the river steamboats which made trips down the Thames to places like Gravesend and Sheerness, and brought you back again at the close of your little outing.

I made up my mind that I would go as far as Gravesend, which is a run of twenty miles from London Bridge, and to Gravesend I went, having taken a return ticket. What the name of the steamboat was by which I made the journey down the river I do not remember, nor does it matter; but it was not the *Princess Alice*. The boat, however, belonged to the same company.

Look at this little bit of pasteboard which I carry in my pocket, folded up, as you see it now, in a piece of paper, to keep it clean. It is the return half of my ticket. It was in my pocket when the *Princess Alice* went down, and has been in my pocket ever since. The bit of cardboard, as you see, is almost as clean and clear as it was on the day of issue. The printing itself is as legible. Only one thing is missing, and that is the printed date of issue, which has been worn quite off. But do I need any reminder of that terrible Tuesday in September, nearly thirty years ago? Are not those things seared into your memory as if a red-hot iron had branded them there?

I went ashore at Gravesend, and enjoyed myself as best I could, which means that I wandered about and made the most of the few attractions there. I was in that happy, careless state when a man does not give a thought to anything except the pleasure of the passing moment. I did not even trouble myself to think either of my return journey or the manner of conducting it.

I have said that trifles light as air control our actions at times. Such a time came upon me then. As careless holidaymakers will at Rosherville Gardens, I made myself agreeable to two young people who were themselves out for enjoyment, and quite willing to strike up a passing friendship. I remember them so vividly, because they were a couple who had just got married, and were spending their wedding-day at Gravesend. I got into

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conversation with them, and we laughed and jested and made merry.

They asked me to go with them, and I rather ridiculed their invitation.

"Why," I told them, "you have only been married to-day, and surely you don't want a third party, You have not had time yet to get tired of each other."

They laughed in return. "We are going back by the *Princess Alice*," they said, "and you must come back with us." That settled the matter, for I agreed to accompany them.

That is the trifle which led to my presence on board the *Princess Alice* when she sailed on that September evening for London Bridge.

The *Princess Alice*, for her day, was a fine little steamboat, but small, indeed, compared with the splendid vessels which now run up and down the river in the summer time, carrying their thousands of merrymakers. She was only 251 tons gross, with a length of 220 feet, and a breadth of 20. Those dimensions are worth studying, because they show what a little vessel she really was, and yet she had on board when she started no fewer than about 900 souls. It is appalling, when you think of it—and that they were mostly women and children, for it was early in the week, you see, just at the time when the menfolk are busy at their work. The steamboat was literally packed with her human freight. There was no such thing as walking about. You had to be content with either sitting or standing, and forming a little part of that solid mass of humanity.

No thought of danger seemed to trouble any living creature on board. Was not everybody holidaymaking, and is not holidaymaking the time for merrymaking? And had not this same journey been made hundreds of times in perfect safety? Had not innumerable thousands of trippers been carried up and down the river without accident of any sort?

Song and laughter and choruses of joyous sounds arose from the people who were gliding on the smooth surface of the river, believing that in an hour or two they would all be happily at home again, relating their adventures and enjoyment of the day.

The paddles thumped bravely, and the shores slipped past. The river winds and twists between London Bridge and Gravesend, as anyone can see by glancing at a map of it. The biggest turnings are known as reaches, and a little way below Woolwich there is what is called the Gallions Reach, which is very much like a gigantic bent arm

At such a place navigation is a most delicate and difficult business, and in order to avoid accident between ships that pass each other every allowance must be made for paddles, engines, rudders, and tide.

As a man who had spent many years at sea, I naturally kept a sharp eye on these dangerous parts of the river, and I was looking along the stretch of water at the Gallions when I saw a screw steamboat coming towards us. She was, for those days, a fairly big vessel, being about 1400 tons. What she was then I did not know, but I and the rest of the world soon knew her to be the *Bywell Castle*, an outward-bound collier. She seemed to stand very high out of the water, for she was in ballast, and was what a sailorman would call "flying light."

For the first few moments, even I had no misgiving of disaster. I was playing with some children. Then I heard a startled cry. I looked up in fear and amazement—a marvellous change from my mood of only a few seconds earlier, for I had just been joking with my new-found friend, the bride from Gravesend. We had been laughing hilariously, for she had just been telling me that her husband must go to work on the following day, and suggesting that she and I should run down to Gravesend again the next morning. It is the sort of jest that free and easy holidaymakers love.

With laughter still in my heart, I looked ahead, and saw the *Bywell Castle* actually looming over our starboard bow. She looked like a great monster which was deliberately coming up to strike her prey.

The captain—he went down with his ship—had just passed me to go on to the bridge. As for myself, I sprang on to a form and shouted: "She will be into us!"

Almost before the words were out of my mouth, the great bow had crashed into the side of us, just by the starboard sponson, which is the wooden platform jutting out from the paddle-box. She drove into the very heart of the *Princess Alice*, just as a strong knife may be driven through a matchbox.

With such a heavily-laden steamer as ours, under way, and such a mass of iron as the *Bywell Castle* was, the impact was terrific, and the force of the blow of the *Bywell Castle's* stem was resistless. She cut through as far as the engine-room, and literally doubled us up and smashed us into two pieces. Almost before you could think, the fore part of the *Princess Alice* settled down and sank, and the after part tilted up in the

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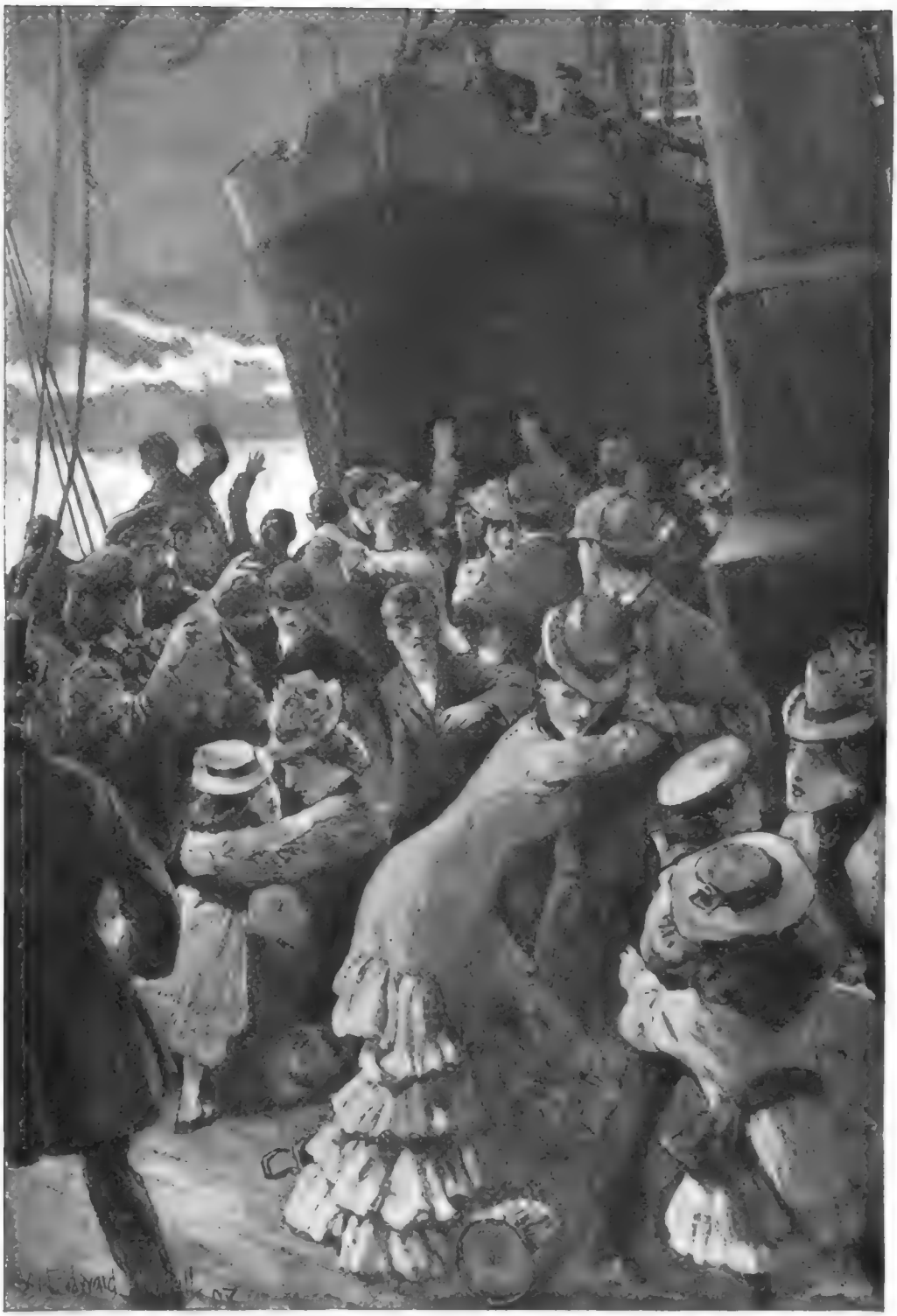

Almost before the words were out of my mouth, the great bow had crashed into the side of us.

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air. Those were early days, remember, for water-tight compartments, which in these times do so much to keep a crippled ship afloat.

Cannot you picture for yourself, without any words from me, what that sudden change from merriment to death meant? It was eventide, and the loud laughter was succeeded by the wildest and most pitiful shrieks that could rend the still air.

Some of the merrymakers—and they were fortunate, because they were spared much terrible suffering—were killed on the spot, both on deck and below; others were hurled overboard by the shock; some in their frenzy sprang into the water and were drowned.

All of us seemed to drop down like skittles. Then there was a frightful struggle both on deck and in the water. Men and women and children rolled over and clutched and tore at each other, and with it all there were the ceaseless screaming and hopeless appeals for help. How, in such a sudden and unexpected catastrophe, could help be given?

The entire surface of the river was a mass of struggling, panic-stricken, and despairing humanity. Everything that was within reach was seized and held in the convulsive grip of death. Merciful indeed it was that at the very outset so many sank and never rose again.

It is useless to ask me to explain to you what my real sensations were at that great crisis. I had been in many desperate situations in far away and dangerous parts of the world, and so far as fear went I think I can say that as a young man I did not know the meaning of it. No such things as nerves had ever troubled me.

All I can tell you is that I was stunned by the magnitude of the calamity; I was unable to grasp the full meaning of it. All I could do was to obey the overwhelming instinct of self-preservation.

I saw that the only hope of safety for me lay in reaching, if I could, the deck of the *Bywell Castle*. She herself was little damaged, because, as a rule, it is the vessel which is run into that suffers most, especially when, as in our own case, she is struck amidships.

But how was I to achieve the seemingly impossible—how reach that towering deck up those smooth, straight iron sides?

Half of the *Princess Alice* was already almost submerged, and it was merely a question of moments for the entire ship, broken in two pieces as she was, to disappear altogether.

I glanced swiftly about me, and saw that there was only one way of reaching the place of safety I have mentioned. That was to swarm up one of the chains supporting the funnel of the *Princess Alice*, and clamber from the top of it to the *Bywell Castle*, the bow of which, still sticking into the dreadful, gaping wound which it had made, was within reach.

How I did it I do not know to this day, but in my frenzy and despair I swarmed up the funnel guy just as in my earlier days at sea I had climbed aloft.

Look at this thumb of mine. See the scar upon it—that is the mark of a wound which I received in my climb for life; but how the wound came there I cannot tell you.

From the top of the funnel, already shivering as the shattered steamboat settled in the water, I clambered on to the deck of the *Bywell Castle*. Thank God, the horror of it all did not unnerve me, and my sea training helped me to do what I could not have accomplished if I had been a landsman.

I sprang to a boat, calling for men to come and help me to lower it. And with what result? None that was satisfactory—only bitter, piteous disappointment, for the tackle was foul, and the ropes would not work properly.

The boat was partially lowered, and then, dangling uselessly in air, seemed as if it would never be of service. Means of salvation so near, and yet unavailable because of the carelessness of man! It was a heart-breaking disappointment; but at last we got the boat afloat, and we threw ropes and tried to haul the struggling people on board from the water. Some of our efforts were successful, and a few at any rate of the poor creatures were saved who would otherwise most certainly have perished.

It seems too terrible to dwell upon such a catastrophe, but since you will have the story I will go ahead with it. I heard the loud order given for the anchor of the *Bywell Castle* to be let go. I knew—again as a sailor—what this meant. I hurried to the bow and looked over, and as the order was obeyed I saw a sight the very recollection of which is almost unendurable.

The cable, a great iron chain, was hanging straight down through the hawse-hole, the anchor being very near the water. As the bow had driven into the *Princess Alice* a swarm of struggling people had seized the chain and anchor, and were clinging to it as they prayed for the help which could not be given to them. The anchor was let go, and the human cluster disappeared with it into that engulfing stream. Was it not a death-rattle indeed as the cable clanked through the

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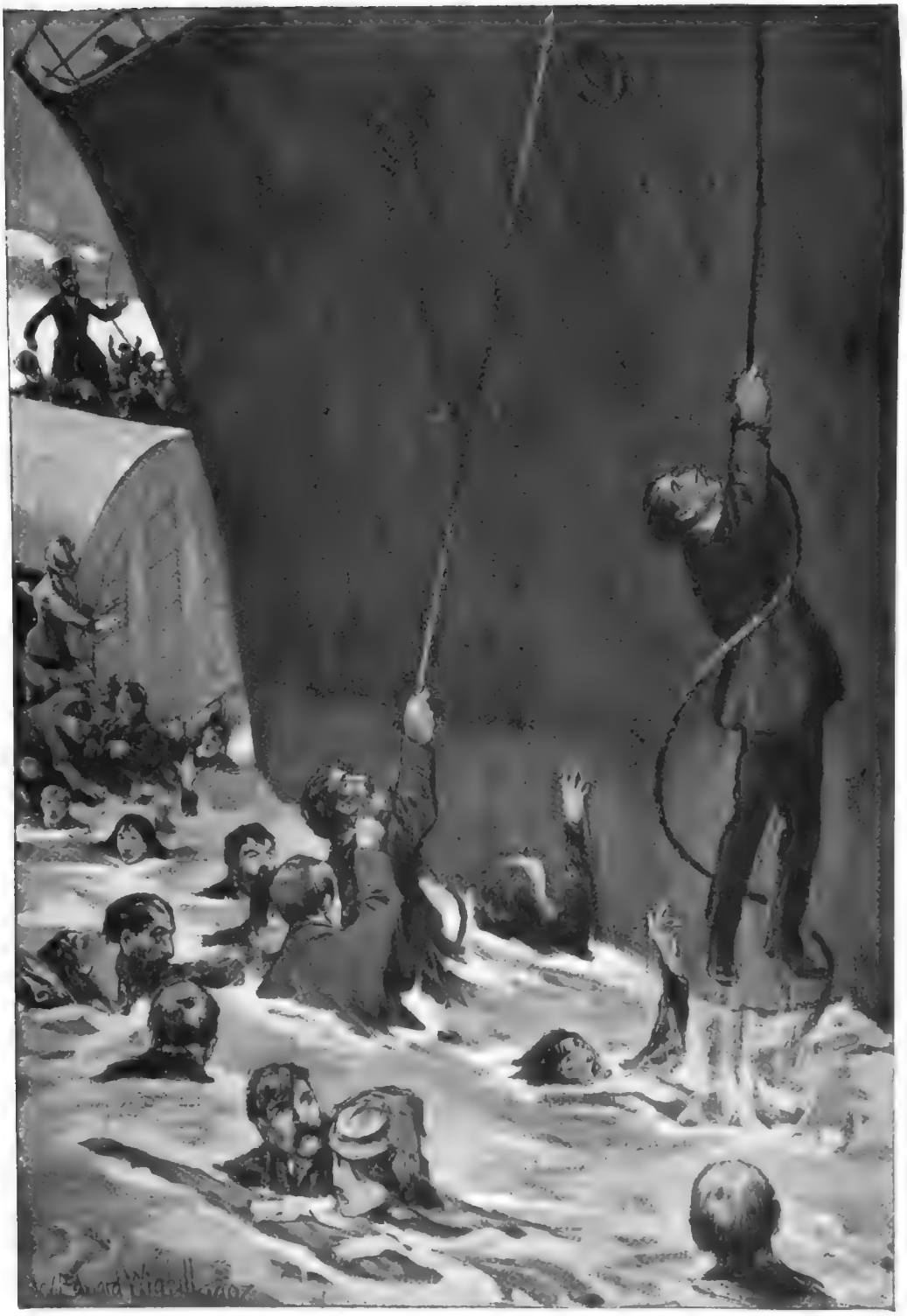

To every piece of rope that was thrown out some despairing creature clung.

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hawse-hole? But, mercifully, we got several people clear of the cable before we let go.

It was too terrible, the horror of it was too overwhelming; yet that spectacle was only one of many of the same description. To every piece of rope that was thrown out some despairing creature clung, and to that creature in turn others held on, forming a living chain. What could happen in such an extremity except that the man or the woman who was holding to the rope should have the grasp torn away, and that all who tried so hard to save themselves should be lost?

I rushed about as well as I could in that wild turmoil to try and get help to rescue the perishing. But nobody seemed to have the power of prompt and useful action. I saw the pilot, and spoke to him, but he like the rest was in such a hopeless state that nothing could be done.

Almost before it was possible to realise that the accident had happened, all was over. The *Princess Alice* had sunk, and those who had not got to the shore or on board the *Bywell Castle*, or had not been picked up by the craft which happened to be about and to come up on hearing of the accident, had vanished.

A few minutes before nearly a thousand people had been full of life and merriment, and now, of the whole of that great crowd, only about two hundred remained, and these were prostrate with shock or actual suffering. A number did not survive, but died very speedily as the result of the collision. A few minutes only had passed between the sounds of laughter and the despairing shrieks, then, as the darkness itself closed in and shut out to some extent the pitiful tragedy, the silence of death itself fell on the river.

I helped to get some of the bodies ashore at Woolwich. Then, utterly overcome by what had happened, crushed in spirit, broken in body, I crawled off to make my way back to London. It was impossible for me to walk, so I hailed a cab. The disaster was known to the driver, yet even at such an extremity he sought to turn human suffering to his own benefit. He demanded a sovereign as his fare. He did not get it, for I went home by train. Thank God such callousness was rare in connection with the loss of the *Princess Alice*. The disaster thrilled the civilised world, and nearly £40,000 was raised to help the sufferers. A good Christian came forward and gave me £10 with which to take a rest to recover my health.

Few of those who were saved are living now. Recently I was spoken of as the only survivor. Probably there are one or two more left; but I doubt not that many who got over the accident itself died earlier than would otherwise have been the case.

One strange incident I recall. About three years ago I was at the Crystal Palace, when a waiter came up to me and said: "I beg your pardon, but you were in the *Princess Alice!*"

I was utterly astonished and showed it.

"I was in the *Princess Alice*," I admitted; "but how do you know that?"

"Because I was in her too," he answered. "I recognised you as soon as I saw you!"

And that was twenty-six years and more after the disaster! I could not have changed much in appearance, could I? And what of the impression made upon the waiter's mind? Does such a calamity print a picture upon the memory which nothing can efface but death itself? I think so.

And the bridal couple—what of them? you ask. The young wife left me with the laughter of her joke on her lips, and almost before it had ceased she was numbered with the lost. I never saw her or her husband again.

My wife remembers my leaving home in the morning to go to Spurgeon's College She did not know that I was not there, and was perfectly easy in mind until the time came when I was due home again. Then, woman-like, she began to worry. Tea and toast were cold on the table, darkness settled, midnight came—then she could bear the suspense of my absence no longer. She went out into the street and heard terrible whisperings and tales of a dreadful disaster on the Thames. For the first time the fear assailed her that perhaps I had gone on board the *Princess Alice*.

Midnight passed; one, two, three o'clock struck—still no news of the missing one The silent vigil was maintained, and three more melancholy hours went by.

At six o'clock in the morning a crazy-looking man, hopelessly dirty, with hands burnt and torn, clothes disarranged and damaged—a sleeve of his coat was torn away—and with the ghastly hue of death upon his face, entered the house. He kissed his children, then fell on his knees and thanked God for his preservation. He was implored to explain what had happened, but he answered that he could not tell, and that the morning papers would have the awful story.

The man was myself, and that was my home-coming from the holocaust of the *Princess Alice*.

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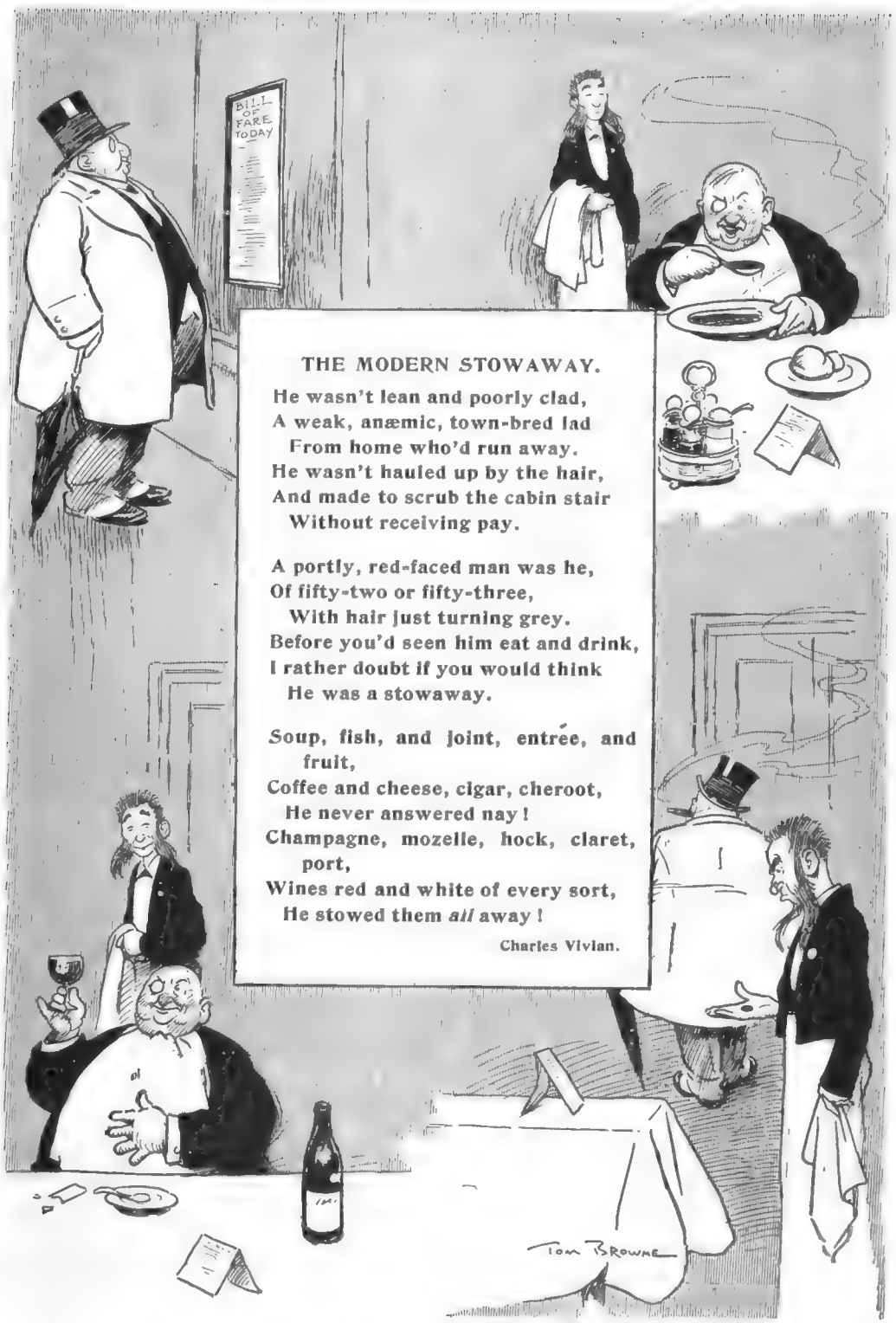

THE MODERN STOWAWAY.

He wasn't lean and poorly clad,
A weak, anæmic, town-bred lad
From home who'd run away.
He wasn't hauled up by the hair,
And made to scrub the cabin stair
Without receiving pay.

A portly, red-faced man was he,
Of fifty-two or fifty-three,
With hair just turning grey.
Before you'd seen him eat and drink,
I rather doubt if you would think
He was a stowaway.

Soup, fish, and joint, entrée, and fruit,
Coffee and cheese, cigar, cheroot,
He never answered nay!
Champagne, mozelle, hock, claret, port,
Wines red and white of every sort,
He stowed them *all* away!

Charles Vivian.

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THE QUESTS of PAUL BECK.

No. VI.—THE RAPE OF THE RUBY.

By M. McDonnell Bodkin, K.C.

Paul Beck, the Famous Detective, Displays his Wonderful Powers in a Search for Stolen Jewels, and is Again Triumphant, in Spite of Formidable Obstacles.

(A Complete Story.)

"I want a room, not a rat-hole," said the Hon. Staunton Toleron angrily to the manager of the Hotel Cyril.

He had been offered a small room on the fifth floor with one window looking out on nowhere.

The manager, a short, stout, dark man with close-clipped whiskers and beady eyes, was all politeness. Plainly he did not want to offend an "Honourable," though a more dishonourable "Honourable" than Staunton Toleron could not be found in broad England. A handsome young fellow enough of the "dude" type, nose long, mouth weak, eyes light blue, chin and forehead slightly receding, hair parted smoothly in the centre, he looked the pigeon rather than the hawk.

His face was his fortune at the racecourse and the card-table, but of late his fortune had been somewhat out of joint. There were ugly rumours afloat, and men had become shy of playing or betting with the Hon. Staunton.

"I'm so sorry," said the manager, "but it's the best we can do for you; the place is crowded from the floor to the roof."

"Couldn't you put me somewhere that looks out on to the river? I want a breath of air; I don't want to be roasted before my time."

"Yesterday we could have," said the manager; "to-day we cannot. Our last suite of rooms—about the best we have—were taken for Miss Betty Barry."

"But she's in Paris; she doesn't open at the Lyceum until Monday, and this is only Friday."

"She has taken the rooms in advance. She had them last time she was here, and she likes them, and she is a lady who doesn't let anything interfere with her liking. She will be here on Monday afternoon."

"Put me in till she comes, there's a good fellow. I know Betty; she is a pal of mine and a right good sort. I'm sure she wouldn't object. I hope to clear out before Sunday; but if I have to stay on I'll take the rat-hole when she comes. You can dock the cost of the rooms for three days from Miss Betty's bill."

The Hon. Staunton got his way, and also the handsomest suite in the hotel—bedroom, sitting-room, and bath-room fronting the river.

The rooms were luxurious, and he was luxurious, so they suited each other. The big sitting-room was specially delightful. Every article in it, from the rich Turkey carpet that covered the centre of the room, to the spindle-shanked Sheraton chairs and tables that stood or slipped on the polished marqueterie round its edges, had a history—and a price.

For three days the Hon. Staunton made himself perfectly comfortable till the famous Betty Barry arrived to evict him. Naturally her coming made a stir at the hotel. A lovely girl with the blue eyes, and black hair, and narrow, arched eyebrows of the true-born Celt, she had the two great qualities of the actress—genius and beauty. Together they are irresistible. The critics praised her, and the public worshipped her. The theatres she

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played in were always thronged out to the doors and up to the ceiling, and she held the audience in thrall to laugh or weep as she chose.

But it was neither her beauty nor her genius that made such a stir at the Hotel Cyril, but her jewels. They were a miraculous collection, and she wore them freely on all occasions, for Betty was not one of those fine ladies who send their jewels to their banker or pawnbroker, and wear paste. Everything she wore was real. Assured of that beforehand, the ladies could admire without reserve.

Above all and beyond all, there was the wonderful ruby never before seen in England.

This famous jewel had a history—a true, romantic, and sensational history; a history that only just escaped being scandalous. A certain Crown Prince had fallen in love madly with the beautiful Betty when she played Juliet in his father's capital. There is no use raking up old scandals by repeating the names. His mad passion burst all bounds of discretion and decorum. He made no secret of his infatuation. He followed her everywhere; he offered her marriage, not even the morganatic imitation, but the genuine article.

The Royal father and mother, who had promised him to a discreet, steady, and stolid young German princess, were distracted. But Betty Barry behaved admirably. She told her Royal lover gently but firmly that she didn't love him and wouldn't have him. What's more, she made him see that she meant it. Then she good-humouredly coaxed him out of his folly; they parted the best of friends, and he went back obediently to his German princess.

"It is hard luck," he complained to his Royal mother. "If I were not a fool of a Crown Prince I might have a chance. But she won't have me, and that's flat, and she is too good a sort to worry. I might as well cry for the moon. She is just as bright and as cold and as much above me, though I am a Crown Prince."

He did not say this in English, because he didn't know any English, but in the foreign equivalent that was spoken in his capital.

So the storm passed and the scandal was averted, and the beautiful actress was made much of at Court, and became the pet of an Empress who was amiable and kind-hearted, if a little eccentric.

"Good-bye, my dear," she said at a private audience, "I am half sorry my boy couldn't marry you. He'll have a dull time with his princess. I'd have had a dull time myself if it wasn't for fox-hunting. But I suppose it is all for the best. Anyway, you behaved just splendidly, and this will help you to remember an Empress who is very grateful."

It was then that she gave her the ruby—the matchless, priceless ruby, that half the female Royalties of Europe had envied. Of course there was an outcry. The Imperial ruby to a mere actress! It was a scandal—almost a sacrilege! But the Empress was a woman used to her own way. The old Emperor, who was half in love with the beautiful Betty himself, let her have it; and so the actress carried the famous ruby back to London. No wonder the ladies of London were agog for a sight of it.

They had their wish. The very first night of her arrival at the Hotel Cyril, Betty Barry dined at the table d'hôte instead of, as was expected, in her own private room. She was in full evening dress—a rich brocaded poplin, brilliant with many jewels. A hundred sparks of coloured lights flashed on her dress and in her coal black hair, and the ruby burned with a rosy, flickering fire on her bosom, outblazing them all. It was cut to the shape of a heart—the deep, rich red of pigeon's blood, warmed by an imprisoned fire.

It so happened that the Hon. Staunton, who had retired to the "rat-hole," sat beside her at dinner. He had known her before she was famous, and she never forgot old friends. She was delighted by his frank admiration of the heart-shaped ruby.

"Isn't it glorious!" she said, with the naïve delight of a child. "I have never seen a jewel so beautiful."

"It is peerless," said Staunton, "and I dare say priceless. Aren't you afraid of losing it or having it stolen?"

"Not in the very least," she cried gaily. "It is precautions that provoke thieves. I have never lost so much as a seed pearl. My maid I could trust with my life, not to speak of my jewels. Indeed, I'm to be pitied," she said with mock pathos. "A good jewel robbery is, as you know, the best advertisement for an actress, and I cannot get anybody to steal mine."

"Don't quarrel with your good luck, Betty," cautioned the Hon. Staunton, with the gravity of the true gambler, "or it is bound to change."

It proved a prophecy. Next day, her jewels were stolen—the famous, priceless ruby amongst them, and the Hon. Staunton

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Toleron was unpleasantly mixed up in the business.

It was Barbara Muſſen, Betty's Irish maid, that gave the first alarm. She was wild with excitement, and her words tripped each other up as she poured out her story to the hotel manager.

The actress was accustomed, when possible, to dress for her part at the hotel, and drive in her brougham to the theatre ready to step on to the stage. While Barbara was engaged in laying out her dress, the telephone bell rang, and her mistress' voice called her to the hall. She went down in the lift, locking the door after her. Her mistress was not in the hall. She went straight back to the room. A gentleman was just leaving the room as she got to the landing, and crossed her on his way to the lift. She found the door of her mistress' sitting room was shut, but not locked.

The door and window of the bedroom were open, and the jewels, including the great ruby, were gone.

"What was the gentleman you met at the door like?" queried the hotel manager.

"Tall, fair, with a long, blonde moustache, and very handsome."

"The Hon. Staunton Toleron!" gasped the manager. "Come, girl, we must find him at once." They found him at once, and without much difficulty. He was seated at a small table in the hall, reading a sporting paper and smoking a cigarette.

"Stand here and watch that he does not move," whispered the manager, "while I will go for Mr. Nichols."

Mr. Nichols, the private detective employed at the hotel, came back a moment later with the fussy little manager, to whom he made as sharp a contrast as a greyhound to a poodle. A typical detective was Mr. Nichols—tall, gaunt, with a long face, clean-cut features and a pair of piercing eyes.

Together they came up quietly to Barbara, who was quivering with excitement. "He has not made a move," she said, "except to light another cigarette and turn over the paper."

Mr. Nichols made a note in a little note-book shaped exactly like a matchbox. "In the working of a scientific problem, Mr. Moulang," he said to the manager, "there is nothing small enough to be neglected."

"Will you arrest him?" whispered Mr. Moulang.

"Not at first; I want to question him. Questions are not allowed after arrest. We can go to your private office, I suppose?"

Mr. Moulang nodded.

"I shall want you and the girl later; wait here for a moment."

Mr. Nichols crossed the hall carelessly and seated himself at the little table opposite the Hon. Staunton Toleron.

"Can you oblige me with a match?" he asked very politely.

As the Hon. Staunton leant across the table with a light, Mr. Nichols looked him in the eyes and said softly: "I am a detective. I wish to have a private interview with you. Resistance is useless; I am armed." He touched his hip pocket dramatically.

The Hon. Staunton looked at him for a moment with blank bewilderment, that quickly gave place to amusement.

"You are not serious, old chap."

"Quite serious. Will you come quietly with me?"

"Why certainly; lead on, Macduff!"

"Pardon me, you go first. Kindly follow Mr. Moulang and that girl to his office."

"Always ready to follow a pretty girl. But I say, this is a rum joke."

"It is no joke, as you will soon find," retorted the other sternly. "I assure you, sir, your levity is quite misplaced in the business, as I think this young lady will speedily convince you."

Staunton's face grew grave as he listened to the girl's story, but with no trace of anxiety or fear.

"Egad, this is serious," he said; "the ruby alone should be worth a big fortune. But how can I help?"

"The young lady says she saw you coming out of the room just before the robbery. Is that true?"

"Why, certainly. We crossed each other on the stairs. I mistook the room for my own. I said so as she passed."

"You did not mention that," said Mr. Nichols sharply to the maid.

"I did not know what he said or meant," she faltered.

"Mr. Moulang will know what I meant," said the Hon. Staunton. "I had occupied the room for some days before. I turned in quite mechanically at the open door as I passed."

"But the door was locked," interposed Mr. Nichols.

"Pardon me, the door was open."

"You said you locked the door—didn't you?" The detective snapped the inquiry at Barbara.

"I'm almost sure I locked it," she faltered nervously.

"You were mistaken, miss, I assure you,"

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remarked the Hon. Staunton politely; "it was certainly open as I passed. I was thinking of something else as I turned the handle. But of course I recognised in a moment, when I saw the lady's things about, that the room was not mine."

"How long were you out of the room, madam?" demanded the detective.

"A minute I should think, perhaps two at the outside."

"That wouldn't give the thief much time," said the detective grimly. There was a marked change in his manner when he turned again to Staunton. His tone was respectful, almost deferential. "You won't mind telling us, sir, where you went next?"

"Straight down in the lift to the table where you found me ten minutes later."

"I don't think we need trouble you further, Mr. Toleron, for the present."

"Pardon me, Mr. Nichols; this is a serious matter. The jewels, lost or stolen, are, as I happen to know, of fabulous value. I was most unfortunately in the rooms it seems just before they disappeared. I do not choose that any suspicion, however preposterous, should rest on me. I desire, before you make any further inquiries, that I shall be thoroughly searched."

Mr. Moulang held up his hands in protest.

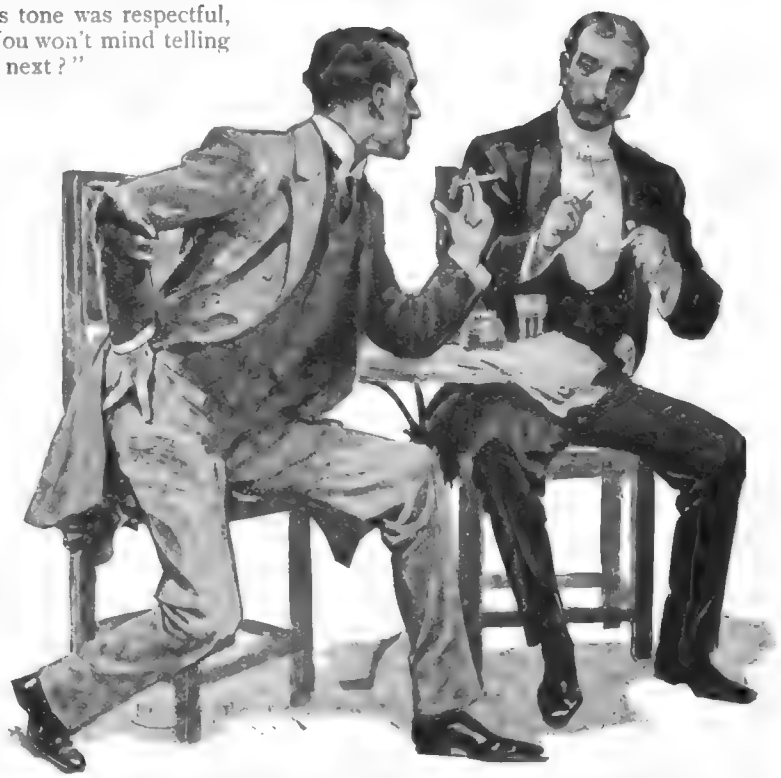
"He is right," said the detective. "It is only a formality, but it is a very expedient formality. Mr. Moulang, will you kindly take the young lady to another room—and keep a close eye on her," he added in a whisper as the manager passed.

As might have been anticipated, nothing was found in the search which Staunton Toleron had insisted on. The evidence of the lift man and the waiter showed it was impossible that he could have got rid of the jewels.

He had gone down in the lift to the hall, and had not left the waiter's sight until Mr. Nichols had come up to him.

In the hall he had taken a sheet of paper from his pocket-book, put it in an envelope, and handed it to the waiter to post. There was nothing in the envelope except the thin sheet of paper. Of that the waiter was quite certain.

Had the jewels been thrown through the window to an accomplice? That question, too, was quickly settled. There was a policeman stationed outside. He had been there for half-an-hour. He was quite sure that no one had passed, and nothing had been thrown while he was there.



"I am a detective. I wish to have a private interview with you."

Rapidly and discreetly Mr. Nichols made his inquiries, all leading straight to nothing. No one in the hotel, except the parties concerned, knew of the mysterious robbery, when Betty Barry, in her light run-about motor driven by herself, swept smoothly up to the hotel door.

The manager met her in the hall, consternation in his face.

"Miss Barry," he said, "I would wish a word with you in private."

Some instinct told her what had happened.

"My jewels," she whispered, "they have been stolen?"

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He nodded dismally, and without another word she followed him to his private room.

Mr. Nichols was there, self-contained and composed; Mr. Staunton eager and excited; poor Barbara Mullen, her arms on a table, and her face on her arms, sobbed noiselessly.

Betty Barry walked straight to the girl, and patted her encouragingly on the shoulder.

"Don't cry, Barbara," she said, "don't cry; we'll find them yet."

But Barbara only sobbed on disconsolately.

As she turned from the girl, Betty found Mr. Nichols' keen eyes fixed on her face. A sudden thought took her.

She faced him indignantly. "Has anyone," she cried, "dared to hint that Barbara took them?"

Her own loss seemed forgotten in her sympathy with the girl. The pose of the great actress was splendid; her slim figure in its dark, close-fitting dress, drawn up to its full height, her blue eyes blazing, her finger pointing scornfully at the detective.

Mr. Moulang started guiltily, for he and Mr. Nichols had been whispering suspiciously, but the detective never moved a muscle.

"Perhaps you had better hear the facts first, Miss Barry," he said coolly.

"All right." She turned from him sharply, and again laid an encouraging hand on the shoulder of the girl. "Tell me, Barbara, how did it all happen?"

Mr. Nichols would have interposed, but she silenced him with a look. "I will hear the girl first, if you please, sir."

Poor Barbara raised a tear-stained face, and told her story in incoherent sentences broken with sobs.

"Are you quite sure, my dear, you locked the door?" asked her mistress.

"I was quite sure at first, but I'm not now. How could he get into the room if I did!"

"It wasn't your fault anyway, so don't fret. Besides, something tells me it will come all right. I will get those jewels back again, never fear."

"Indeed, I hope so with all my heart," broke in Staunton Toleron fervently. "I'd give my right hand to recover them."

"It's very kind of you, Mr. Toleron," said the actress graciously, "but I should be sorry to take the exchange. Thanks all the same."

"Oh, don't thank me, Miss Barry. It's more for my own sake than yours. It is hateful to me to be mixed up in this business."

"But you are not mixed up in it."

"But I am. What will the world say? It is known I am a poor man. My character is not of the best; though no one, so far, has accused me of robbery. The evidence looks black enough against me. Don't you see it does?" Then he told his story, in no way cloaking or colouring the facts.

"It is quite impossible that Mr. Toleron could have taken the jewels," said the unimpassioned voice of the detective.

"I don't need you to tell me that," retorted Betty Barry petulantly. She had plainly taken a dislike to Mr. Nichols.

But he went on placidly without the slightest notice of her irritation, checking the points off methodically on his long, thin fingers.

"We have never lost sight of Mr. Staunton Toleron from the moment he left your room to the search on which he himself insisted. It is a matter of pure reason," he continued, "that the jewels must have gone by the window or the door. The policeman shows they did not go through the window; Mr. Toleron proves they did not come with him through the door."

"Is that all?" said Miss Barry curtly. "Then, I suppose, I may put in my word. Of course, I'm mad to lose my jewels, but I mean to have them back. The newspapers will be all crying out it's an advertisement. Now I don't want a fuss. I don't want anyone to know about this except just our four selves. Can that be managed?"

Mr. Moulang raised his eyes and hands in grateful relief. "If you so wish," he murmured.

"But Mr. Nichols?" queried Miss Barry.

"Mr. Nichols is employed by us," said Mr. Moulang.

"Excuse me," said Mr. Nichols quietly, but firmly, too, "I have also a duty to the public. I must strive to find the thief."

"Do, do!" cried Miss Barry impatiently, "if you can. I'll give a thousand pounds to whomever finds him. I don't want to stop you. I only want things to be done quietly. A fuss won't help you—will it? Catch the thief quietly, and I will pay a thousand pounds when you catch him."

"Him or her?" queried Mr. Nichols.

Her eyes blazed at him. For an instant she looked as if she were going to break out in a whirlwind of passion, but she pulled herself together. "Or her," she said as quietly as himself. "Here, I will put it in writing." She scribbled a few lines at Mr. Moulang's desk, and thrust it at Mr. Nichols. "Will that do? Very well, I understand you will hold your tongue till the jewels are found."

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"The jewels and the thief. You have my word of honour."

He put the scrap of paper carefully in his pocket-book, and left the room.

"But what about me? Where do I come in?" asked Mr. Toleron.

"Oh, you're all right," said the actress. "People can't talk if they don't know."

"They can sometimes. But honestly, Miss Barry, I hope you don't believe I had anything to do with this business?"

"How absurd. Of course not." She gave him her hand frankly. "I'll prove it to you. I want you to do something for me now at once. You know the Duchess of Southern?"

"A great friend of mine."

"And of mine. It is a coincidence that a few days ago we were talking about jewels and robberies, and she insisted on giving me the name of a man whom she said was miraculous. I have it in my purse somewhere."

From a jumble of miscellaneous rubbish in her purse she fished out a little scrap of crumpled paper, and smoothed it out with a forefinger on her palm. "Here is the name—Paul Beck, Montague Street. I haven't the number—can you find him, do you think?"

"Quite easily. What am I to do with him when found?"

"Bring him straight back here. Now see how I trust you. If I had the very faintest suspicion, I wouldn't ask you to get a rod to beat yourself. I wouldn't send you for Mr. Beck."

"I shall not forget your kindness. Sometime I may have a chance to repay it. I trust sincerely that this man Beck will find the jewels and the thief."

"Bring him to my room when you get him. I'm going there now with Barbara."

When the door closed behind the two girls, Betty Barry's self-possession collapsed as if an overstrained something had snapped in her brain. She plumped down in a cushioned chair and laughed hysterically.

"I cannot help it, Barbara," she gasped, dabbing her eyes with a wisp of cambric. "Another minute and I would have broken down and disgraced myself. There was that old fraud of a detective posing and prosing like a man in a story book, and that woebegone Mr. Toleron imploring me not to suspect him, and the plump little manager fussing about his hotel. The whole thing was a screaming farce."

"But your jewels, miss, your beautiful lovely jewels!"

"I cannot somehow realise that they are gone. I suppose I'll be very sorry for them later on. But I don't and I won't believe they are gone for ever. I feel quite certain they will come back again; don't you?"

She sprang the question on her so suddenly that Barbara coloured and looked confused. "You know best, miss," she faltered.

"I! I know no more than you do. Would you insinuate, Barbara, that I stole them myself? Oh, fie for shame, you naughty girl."

Then suddenly the girl's mood changed, and her laughter broke without warning into sobbing. "My beautiful, beautiful ruby," she wailed. "I'll never, never see it again!"

"But you said just now," Barbara began.

"No matter what I said just now. Haven't I a right to cry as well as you I'd like to know? You shouldn't have been so careless, Barbara. No, no, I don't mean that. Don't whimper, my dear girl, it wasn't your fault. There's no use in crying after lost rubies. Besides, I've got to dress for the theatre. I will have to go on without my ruby to-night. Well, I shall know for certain if it is that, or my acting, or my jewels they go to see; that's one comfort. What did you say were taken, Barbara?"

"Only the diamond necklace and earrings, and the ruby."

"Only! indeed! The thief took the pick of the basket. But I have a few sparkles left yet, thank goodness. I'll wear my emeralds to-night." Then, as she turned and caught sight of her tear-stained face in the big glass, "Oh, I say, Barbara, what a fright I look!"

A sharp knock at the door jerked her up suddenly.

Barbara moved to open it.

"One moment," her mistress cried. She dipped her face into cold water, patted it dry with a soft towel, poured a little pool of eau de cologne into the hollow of her right palm, brought her hands together with a splash, and dabbed her eyes and her forehead. Then, while she patted the disordered little ripples of hair back into their places, she called out to Barbara: "Now!"

She was at the door herself as soon as Barbara—cool, easy, and completely self-possessed.

"Mr. Beck, I am sure," she said, and gave her hand graciously to the stout, good-humoured looking man who stepped shyly into the room. "Oh, you're not a bit like what I expected, Mr. Beck!"

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"I never am," said Mr. Beck enigmatically, "that's where the surprise comes in."

"The Duchess of Southern says you are so clever."

"So lucky," corrected Mr. Beck. "Detective's work is like any other work, common sense and good luck will pull you through most times. Don't you think so, Mr. Nichols?" he said, turning to the other detective, who had come in noiselessly after him.

"Certainly not," Mr. Nichols retorted sharply. "I prefer and practise the analytic method myself."

"All right," responded Mr. Beck good-humouredly, "everyone to his taste as the dairymaid said when she kissed her cow. You like analysis and I like luck."

While he was chatting good-humouredly, his sharp eyes took snapshots of the room and the people in it.

"Furniture changed while you were out?" he said to Barbara.

"No, sir."

"Sure you locked the door? Mr. Toleron told me something of the case as we came along."

"I was sure at first, but——"

"Why did you change your mind, my girl?"

"Because Mr. Toleron found it open as he passed."

Mr. Beck, making no comment, moved across to the bedroom door. "May I?" he asked, addressing the actress.

"Why, certainly," she answered, and herself turned the handle of the door to let him pass.

"Lots of jewels left," he said, fumbling among the cases.

"Yes, but the best are gone."

"So Mr. Toleron told me; the matchless ruby and some diamonds—a small handful in all."

"But a very precious handful, Mr. Beck."

"My dear young lady, I know that. But why didn't the thief take more? Why didn't Aladdin fill his pockets full when he got into the cave?"

"Because he hadn't time."

"A good shot, Miss Barry, but it hasn't quite hit the mark. He might grab half-a-dozen cases almost as quickly as one. Halloa! what's this!" He had passed his hand over the outside sill of the open window, and in the far corner his fingers closed upon a key. A touch might have swept it into the street, but Mr. Beck's fingers were quick to grip and hold.

It proved to be the key of a room door, with a tag of metal attached, and a number engraved on the tag.

"The key that I lost, no doubt," cried Betty Barry. "Didn't I tell you, Barbara, I lost the key of my room two days ago? Brought it with me to the theatre; must have dropped it in my dressing room or on the stage. I left orders it should be hunted for."

Just a shadow of disappointment crossed Mr. Beck's face, too swift and faint to notice. He examined the key closely for a moment, ignoring the hand held out for it.

"Yes, I suppose it must be mine," she said, looking at the number when at last he passed it to her. "But how in wonder's name did it come there?"

"That's what we have to find out," said Mr. Beck oracularly.

"If I can be of any help," interposed the Hon. Staunton.

"Perhaps you may be later on. Meanwhile I'd like a word with Mr. Moulang. Good evening, Miss Barry, and don't despair of seeing your jewels again," he said as he left the room.

"The man's a fraud," said Mr. Nichols to Staunton Toleron as the door closed upon the rival detective. "My dear sir, he knows as much about this business as you do."

"Oh, I hope not," retorted Staunton, "I know too much about it for my own peace of mind."

"I believe in Mr. Beck," said Betty Barry gravely. "Good evening, Mr. Toleron; good evening, Mr. Nichols. I've got to dress in ten minutes."

"You'll remember," said Mr. Beck as he shook hands with Mr. Moulang at parting, "just one line to me when any person specially wants those rooms after Miss Barry has left them, and not a syllable to anyone except me."

A few days later Betty Barry called at Mr. Beck's office.

"I hope I haven't put you on the wrong track, Mr. Beck," she said, "or off the right one. My door key has just been discovered in Ophelia's grave at the theatre. So you see it couldn't have been mine you found on the window-sill."

"Oh, I knew that, of course," said Mr. Beck.

"Then why didn't you say so?"

She glanced at him for a moment with sharp suspicion, but he smiled his imperturbable smile. "I thought it better not at the time."

"What are you doing about the jewels?" she asked after a pause.

"Nothing."

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"Nothing, Mr. Beck!" she cried in surprise. "Then have you given up in despair?"

"Not in the least, my dear Miss Barry. I'm just waiting for someone to show me where the jewels are hidden."

"How long do you propose to wait?"

"Until my guide turns up."

It was only a fortnight later that Mr. Moulang telephoned to Mr. Beck that the rooms were taken, and within ten minutes Mr. Beck's hansom was at the hotel door. His dialogue with Mr. Moulang was brevity itself.

"Who is your guest?"

"The Duke of Waldshire."

"You are sure it is he?"

"Certain."

"Then good-bye till the next time. He is not my guide to the jewels." The visit lasted thirty seconds by the clock.

The next time the guest was a young American millionaire, Bertram D. Corcoran, who had come across from Paris. It was his first visit to England, and he was very particular about his rooms. He had seen half-a-dozen suites before he made his choice.

"Is he your guide?" asked Mr. Moulang, with a touch of sarcasm in his voice as he gabbled his news in guttural English.

"Don't know till I try. Can you give me a place here as a waiter for a day or so?"

"Certainly. You want to——"

"Look after Mr. Bertram D. Corcoran; to take care that he is quite comfortable. I'll be back in half-an-hour."

The man that came back in half-an-hour with a light overcoat over his well-kept dress-suit was like Mr. Beck, and yet quite different. A man who knew Mr. Beck very well would say: "What an extraordinary resemblance," but he would never be tempted to confuse the two. The features were alike, but in the expression and manner there was not a suggestion of resemblance.

This was an unmistakable waiter, who had been all his life a waiter. The deft movements of his hands, the gliding walk, the manner brisk yet deferential, all proclaimed him to the manner born.

Mr. Moulang presented the newcomer to the head waiter. "An outsider, Jenkins," he said. "I've been asked to give him a trial. I want you to let him wait on our last American arrival, Mr. Corcoran."

Jenkins frowned and growled. He had marked the American millionaire for his own particular quarry. But the new hand was so good-humoured, so civil, so efficient that he soon emerged from his sulk.

Mr. Corcoran dined out, and returned, after the theatre, to supper, and the new hand waited upon him with respectful assiduity.

Mr. Corcoran professed himself well pleased with his repast, only the green Chartreuse, which he tossed off at a gulp, had a peculiar taste he thought. When the waiter brought him a second glass he found the same taste still, but less marked. He gave the waiter half-a-crown, directing that he should be called at six next morning, and Mr. Beck pocketed the coin without a twinge of conscience.

"Tell the boots to knock hard until I answer," said Mr. Corcoran, as he tossed the napkin on the back of his chair and lit a cigarette, "I'm a heavy sleeper."

"Well," said Mr. Moulang, when he met Mr. Beck an hour later, "what do you propose to do next?"

"Burglary," said Mr. Beck laconically. "I want the key of his room."

"But," expostulated Mr. Moulang, "I really do not see how I can. After all, there is nothing so far as I know against Mr. Corcoran. He is a guest at our hotel, and if you——"

He stammered and came to a full stop. It was not easy to put his suspicions into words.

Mr. Beck helped him out. "Mr. Moulang," he said gravely, "I am acting on a certainty. But I see you've got to safeguard your hotel and your guests. Will you be satisfied if Mr. Nichols comes with me?"

Mr. Moulang eagerly welcomed this way out of his difficulty.

"Then send for Mr. Nichols," said Mr. Beck.

But Mr. Nichols made difficulties of his own. With his keen eyes on Mr. Beck's face he listened to his suggestion; his sharp, clean-shaven face imperturbable as a mask. Only the tight-closed lips twitched with a scornful smile.

"I don't like it," he said quietly when Mr. Beck had finished. "It is too crude and amateurish for my taste. Besides, I'm quite certain that this man Corcoran has nothing to do with the theft. By analytic reasoning I have already, by a process of exhaustion, fixed the identity of the real thief."

Mr. Beck was modestly persistent. "Give me a chance," he pleaded. "I hope to find the clue to the mystery in Mr. Corcoran's pockets. If I am wrong there is no harm done, and you are at liberty to call me a fool."

Mr. Nichols consented under protest.

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He thought a lesson would do Mr. Beck no harm.

"But if Mr. Corcoran should wake?" he suggested.

"He won't wake," said Mr. Beck confidently, "he's a very heavy sleeper. I heard him say so himself."

Mr. Nichols caught his meaning. "Drugged!" he whispered in amazement. "You take heavy risks, Mr. Beck."

"There are no risks in the game when you hold the right cards," said Mr. Beck philosophically, "besides, my luck always pulls me through."

Mr. Nichols smiled scornfully, but made no further comment. "If you're ready," he said, "I am."

The two detective burglars slipped off their shoes while Mr. Moulang watched the proceedings in bewildered terror.

Fortunately the hotel was not full. By one o'clock in the morning there was no one stirring in the corridor. Mr. Beck fitted the key to the door and pushed softly, but it refused to open. "There is something against the door, Nichols," he whispered to his brother burglar. "Slip your hand through and push it gently aside." Nichols' long arm went through the opening and he pushed gently. The next moment there was a crash of breaking crockery. A chair had been put against the door, and the water-jug set on the chair's edge.

Mr. Beck instantly shoved the door open, overturning the chair, and drew Mr. Nichols with him into the room.

Then he listened eagerly for a step or sound in the corridor. There was none. The tick, tick of a clock on the chimney-piece, and the soft snoring of Mr. Corcoran in the inner room, like the cooing of an unseen pigeon, alone broke the silence of the room.

Mr. Beck switched on the electric lamps and flooded the room with sudden light.

"First to clear up the rubbish," he said, and stooped to gather the bits of delph from the carpet.

Mr. Nichols fumed at the delay. "Cannot we get to our task at once," he said, "and be done with it? I have no liking for this business."

"I want our friend when he wakes up to find things as he left them," Mr. Beck explained respectfully. "It may prevent trouble. While I carry off these bits of delph with me and get another water-jug you might go through his pockets, if you don't mind."

Silent as a cat Mr. Beck crept out through the open door, and presently returned with a water-jug which he had purloined from an empty room on the same corridor. Meanwhile, Mr. Nichols, who had carried Mr. Corcoran's clothes out from the bedroom, went through the pockets with methodical dexterity.

He noted the contents of each pocket in a little note-book as he set them on the table in order that everything he took out might be properly replaced.

When his task was completed he turned somewhat contemptuously to Mr. Beck.

"Where's your clue now?" he asked.

The contents of the pockets were of the most commonplace description. There was a plain, heavy gold watch and guard, a leather purse with gold and silver coins in it, a gold cigarette-case and an amber holder, and a dark green morocco leather pocket-book with a number of notes neatly folded. The only one thing out of the common was a little ivory tape measure.

"This is what I expected," Mr. Beck said complacently, touching the tape measure with a stout forefinger. "Are there no papers?"

"Not a scrap, except the bank-notes."

"Ah!" said Mr. Beck, "let me see." He carefully unfolded the notes. In the fold of the third he found a sheet of thin blue paper with an irregular cross in red ink extending almost the whole length and breadth of the sheet, thus:

There was no other mark of any kind on the paper.

"That's not much use to you," sneered Mr. Nichols.

Mr. Beck did not seem to hear him. He was staring intently at the cross. All the good-humoured easiness was gone from his face; his lips were tightly closed; his brows were drawn together in concentrated thought. His keen eyes wandered restlessly round the room, the furniture, ceiling, carpet, seeking an inspiration.

For the first time Mr. Nichols caught a glimpse of the real Mr. Beck.

The tension suddenly relaxed. Mr. Beck breathed a deep breath of relief, as a man who has solved at last a tantalising problem. The tape measure lay on the table at his hand. He pulled out the tiny ribbon and measured the long arm of the cross on the paper—exactly ten inches, the shorter eight inches.

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Then he turned sharply to Mr. Nichols. "Be quick," he said. "Measure that carpet."

There was no deference in his tone now; he spoke in curt command.

Mr. Nichols meekly accepted the situation. He was beginning to feel foolish. At last he recognised his master.

"Twenty feet by sixteen," he said, when he had completed the measurement.

"Half-inch scale," muttered Mr. Beck to himself.

He took the tape measure from the passive hand of Mr. Nichols, who looked on wonderingly, and measured each of the four sections of the cross. Then he measured by scale the cross on the carpet, allowing two feet for the inch, and so found the lines corresponding to the lines on the paper, and the point of intersection.

"Here," he said, pressing his thumb on the exact spot, and with his shoulder pushing away an easy-chair that stood over it.

Down he went on all fours with his eyes close to the carpet.

"Give me the magnifying glass," he said. Mr. Nichols fetched it. Even with the strong glass Mr. Beck's keen eyes could hardly detect an angular slit cut with a razor edge—a mere hair line in the thick carpet. At the point of the angle there was the pin-head of a tiny tack that kept the tongue of carpet in its place.

Mr. Beck prised the little tack out with the blade of his pocket-knife, lifted the angular flap, and exposed some inches of the naked floor with what looked like a circular scratch on the polished wood.

"Neat!" said Mr. Beck with professional appreciation of fine workmanship. He inserted the sharp-pointed corkscrew of his pocket-knife in the wood and whipped out a circular bit with a plop like a plug from a jar.

A long horsehair which had been bent by the wood came up through the hole. Mr. Beck took it gingerly between his finger and thumb and drew out a small silk bag from which he spilt out on the carpet the big ruby heart and a string of diamonds that blazed splendidly in the glow of the electric light.

Mr. Nichols looked on in envious, bewildered admiration. "Shall we arrest him at once?" he whispered. "It's a clear case."

"Not so clear as you think," said Mr. Beck. "How can we connect Mr. Corcoran, who has only just arrived, with the jewellery found in the bedroom floor? But why did he want to be called at six this morning? Now let me think."

As a result of his thoughts he put the bag back into the hole, pressed the button of wood down on the protruding horsehair, and tacked the slip of carpet over it.

"You are satisfied," he said to Mr. Nichols, "that we have found the jewels anyway?"

"And caught the thief," suggested Mr. Nichols.

"Not quite," replied Mr. Beck, "but we may presently. I will bait the trap."

"Now," he said, "we will tell Mr. Moulang how far we have got."

Mr. Moulang was intensely excited. He wanted to arrest Mr. Corcoran at once, but Mr. Beck explained they had not a scrap of evidence against him. "I'm going out to look for some," he explained. "You needn't wait up for me; good-night."

When he was gone Mr. Nichols was good enough to explain to Mr. Moulang that it was sheer, blind, blundering luck that carried Mr. Beck through in defiance of all recognised scientific methods.

In about an hour's time Mr. Beck returned to the hotel, and again he crept up silently to the door behind which the unconscious Mr. Corcoran still slept the deep sleep so kindly provided for him. Mr. Beck entered this time alone, and without trouble replaced the chair at the door and balanced the water-jug on its edge. Then ensconcing himself behind the silk window curtains, through which he cut a small slit with his knife, he leant his shoulder against the wall and went quietly to sleep on his feet.

A slight tap at the outer door awakened him at once, but there was no sound in the bedroom. The tap grew to a clamorous knocking. Still no movement from Mr. Corcoran. Just as Mr. Beck was beginning to fear he had made the dose too strong, his mind was relieved by the welcome sound of a yawn, followed by a sleepy cry "All right."

The next moment Mr. Corcoran in his pyjamas appeared in the sitting-room, rubbing his half-closed eyes in which heavy sleep still lingered. Lifting off the water-jug he pushed the chair from the door and took in his boots and hot water.

"Down to breakfast in an hour," he said to the boots, and locked the door again and replaced the chair and jug. Then returning to his bedroom he threw up the window silently and coughed into the street.

Mr. Beck, with ears strained like a hare's to the cry of far-off dogs, heard a faint echo of Mr. Corcoran's cough from below.

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He . . . gripped Mr. Beck . . . by the collar, and strove . . . to throw him off his balance.

With grim amusement, Mr. Beck watched him take the sheet of blue paper from his pocket and repeat his own performance—measure the paper and the floor, lift the flap of carpet, and draw the bag of jewels from its hiding place.

But as his hands closed on the treasure he was gripped from behind, drawn gently backwards from his knees to the flat of his back on the carpet, where he lay gazing up in helpless bewilderment at the good-humoured face of Mr. Beck.

"Game is up," said Mr. Beck, "hand over"—and without waiting for permission he took the bag of jewels from the nerveless hand of the prostrate Corcoran.

"Now tell me who is in this game with you?" said Mr. Beck pleasantly.

"See you hanged first," growled the other.

"Perhaps I know," suggested Mr. Beck.

"Perhaps you don't! Here goes to warn him!" The man's muscles stiffened and he half rose to his feet, gripped Mr. Beck, who leant over him, by the collar, and strove by a sudden effort to throw him off his balance. Muscle strained against muscle for a moment. Then Mr. Corcoran's head went down with a bump on the carpet, a knee pressed heavily on his chest, and a sponge steeped in chloroform was squeezed tightly upon his lips and nostrils.

For a moment he struggled fiercely. His hands struck out in all directions, and his heels thudded on the soft carpet. But the struggle was soon over, and he lay limp on the floor.

Mr. Beck put a forefinger to his pulse. "All right in half-an-hour," he said, "much simpler and safer than handcuffs and gag. Now for the other."

With the bag of jewels in his hand he crossed into the bedroom. The lower part of the window was curtained; but through the curtain Mr. Beck could dimly distinguish the figure of a tall woman in the street below.

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He raised the window and coughed a very echo of Corcoran's cough. There was an instant answer from the street, and the figure which had been slowly pacing up and down stopped right under the window.

Then Mr. Beck did a very strange thing indeed. He thrust his hand with the bag in it out the full length of his arm, and let the precious parcel drop into the street.

The figure below caught it smartly, thrust it into a side pocket, and disappeared at a quick pace round the corner, to be brought up suddenly in the arms of a big policeman.

"No use struggling, sir," said the constable with a grin, as he slipped the handcuffs dexterously on the wrists of his wriggling prisoner; "don't want to hurt a lady, Mr. Toleron, but I must do my duty. I arrest you for the robbery of the Barry jewels, which are at this moment concealed on your person."

* * * * *

"Of course, I guessed from the first who did the trick," said Mr. Beck next day to Betty Barry.

He had shown her the nest in which her jewels had lain, and now they were having afternoon tea together—a favourite meal of Mr. Beck—in the same room. The ruby heart lay on the table beside her. She wanted to be sure, she said, that she had got it safe back again.

"I guessed," he went on, "but I wasn't quite sure. I might have suspected the girl if she had not said she locked the door. You see, if she had stolen the jewels she would have been quite sure to have left the door open to turn suspicion from herself. But, putting the girl out of the question, the facts pointed, like a sign-post, to the Hon. Staunton. He took the room to get ready the hiding-place, and to have a duplicate key made. I knew I would find that key in the room, for he dared not take it out with him to be discovered when he was searched. The fact that you had lost a key was a coincidence that might have drawn a red herring across the track, but the true scent of the fox was too strong. As it was, it served to make the thief over-confident and reckless.

"I knew that the jewels must be safe somewhere in one of the two rooms, but I hadn't the least notion which or where. So I waited for the thief's confederate to come and show me, and bring me the map of the hiding-place Toleron had posted to him. Afterwards, when I found a particularly tall lady loitering outside the window, the game was quite plain, and I had only to play up to the lead. That's the whole story."

"Not quite, Mr. Beck. I have yet a small part to play in the piece. I don't know how to thank you enough. I am afraid to guess the value of the jewels you have given me back when they were quite lost. I want you to name your own fee."

"Another cup of tea, if you please, and a little more sugar," said Mr. Beck.

\+ \+ \+ \+ \+ \+ \+

THE DÉBUTANTE.

I've had an invitation
From our most gracious King
To go to Court on Monday next—
A not unlooked-for thing.

I'm not stuck-up about it,
Not I. Why should I be?
I shall not cut my dearest friends
(I hope they won't cut me).

In fact, I'm feeling nervous
And do not want to go;
But hardly dare refuse, because
It wouldn't do, you know.

The invitation doesn't say
What clothes I ought to wear.
It's awkward, for I want to make
A good impression there.

Because, I've heard, at Court it pays
To look one's very best—
The Jury sympathises with
A pretty girl well dressed!

Reginald Rigby.

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THE WOMAN BEAUTIFUL

A bottle of cucumber lotion is of great service in removing freckles from the arms and face.

VI.—THE SKIN SPOILT BY AUGUST SUNSHINE.

By Augusta Prescott.

How to Take Away Freckles, Sunburn, and Tan, and Repair the Damage Done to the Complexion by Sun, Wind, Dust, and Salt Water.

August sunshine is hot, and its penalties are severe.

It was a very sensible beauty who devoted the greater part of last spring abroad to the study of the skin.

"I am in Society all the year," she said. "From London I go to the Riviera, and from the Riviera to Scotland, and then home again. It is necessary, therefore, for me to learn how to keep my skin nice, and my hands and arms faultless."

And so she went to Paris to learn the secrets of the skin specialists.

Aside from the startling possibilities of being a Society beauty, every woman owes it to herself and her family to look nice. She wants to appear at her best, even though it be only for her own small circle.

"I want to look nice, if only for my own pleasure," a woman wrote to me some time ago, "and I want to know how to keep my complexion clear and my cheeks pink." Later, she wrote: "You have solved the problem for me."

Keeping the complexion clear and the cheeks pink is the great thing. The skin, no matter what colour it may be, should be clear. It is foolish to think that every woman should have a white skin, for there are beauties, particularly of the French, Italian, Southern, and Spanish types, who are decided brunettes. The skin is a deep, clear olive. And to those who study colour and colour effects, this sort of brunette is more attractive than the blonde.

No matter what shade the skin may be, it should be clear and smooth, and it should be thin. When the skin grows thick and heavy-looking, it should be "treated." Pastry, too many sweets, and irregular eating will make the skin break out. But the woman who is ordinarily careful in her diet need have no fear of this happening. Her skin will be smooth. The next thing is to make it clear and bright.

A bright skin is one that is treated daily, while the dull, greasy skin is one that is neglected.

The pores of a shiny face are not free, and the face that is spotted or freckled is one that

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has been denied the facial bath. These skins should be treated with natural acids to stimulate the cuticle.

Although there are several things that may be applied to clear it, the trouble is that many of them are injurious to the cuticle. After they have been used repeatedly the skin becomes sore. It may actually wear out, and then its last condition is much worse than its first.

The best way to clear the skin is with natural fruit acids. And here the toilet-table comes in for its share of attention. In every woman's dressing-room there should be a wide, low table, well exposed to the light; and on this table there should be a mirror so placed that the entire face can be seen at a glance. The light should fall on both sides of it if possible; and before the mirror there should be a chair, where one can seat oneself comfortably.

The contents of the table should be varied and numerous. It is impossible to have a nice skin unless one understands how to stock the dressing-table. Once stocked, the materials last a long time; and, if replenished one by one, they will cost very little and give very little trouble.

Nothing is so efficacious in clearing the skin as the natural acid of fruit. Open the pores of the face with hot water, and then rub half a ripe grape-fruit well into the skin.

What fruit to use is a matter of experiment. Thus, some girls find that pomegranates and lemons cut in half and rubbed on the face are best for their complexions.

"Don't advise me to buy expensive things," wrote a girl to me lately, "but tell me how to make cheap and good things myself."

To make cheap and good things, be sure to supply yourself with the necessary fruits and vegetables for the season. Upon the toilet-table there should be a pint bottle of cucumber lotion, made by simmering a cucumber in a pint of water, which is strained, and to which a teaspoonful of borax powder is added. On the table there should be also a big ripe tomato for the daily removal of tan. This is particularly good for the motoring girl whose skin is wind-swept and broken after her hard ride in the sun and weather.

To use the ripe tomato, treat the face with very hot water until the pores are open. Next rub the tomato right into the skin, letting it remain on a few minutes. Then wash the face with warm water (and soap, if necessary), and, with the rinsing, the tan will come off.

Strawberries at this time of year are of incalculable value to the

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Strawberries are very valuable in skin treatment. The juice of a pint of berries in a pint of white wine vinegar makes an excellent lotion.

woman who wants to be pretty. There is a certain American beauty whose skin is famous. This woman makes a practice of washing her face in strawberry juice so long as she can get strawberries. Being very fair, she dilutes it a little, as strawberries will stain a very white skin. They can be used pure on a skin that is olive or brunette.

The juice of a pint of berries, added to an equal amount of white wine vinegar, makes a very nice bath lotion. It may be used upon neck, hands, and arms, and upon the face. But be careful to keep it from irritating the eyes. The ripe berry can be rubbed upon the face and arms, providing they will stand it without becoming stained. Otherwise, dilute the juice with water that has been softened with borax, or with water into which a handful of oatmeal is thrown.

Cold cream is the basis of all good looks, and—particularly in the summer-time—a woman should supply herself with a quantity of it, to be used freely every day. Many women use it exclusively, putting nothing else upon the face; and there is a famous beauty specialist who advertises that in fifteen years she has not had a drop of water upon her face. Cold cream, slightly warm and softened by manipulation, keeps the skin clear.

But the average woman prefers soap and water, and for her there are facial baths which are very refreshing. The first of them is the soap-and-water lather, followed by a dash of cold water to tighten the skin. If the skin has big, open pores, a few drops of benzoin can be added to the water. Then comes the massage with cold cream, which will feed the pores and take off the tan, and relieve the face of sunburn.

The woman who has been out in the sun may omit the soap and water, and use the cold cream, spreading it on her skin and leaving it there for an hour. It is then taken off with a bit of absorbent cotton-wool, and the skin is dusted with powder. This will protect it, and cure an otherwise bad case of sunburn.

The dressing-table should have two pots of cream—one a white cream for taking off the tan, and the other a softer cream, which acts as a skin food. These are very easily made at home, and for a few pence a woman can fit out her dressing-table for the entire summer. The ingredients are cheap, and very often it happens that she has them already in the house.

"My jar of skin food costs me just sixpence," a woman wrote to me lately, "and I have enough to last me a month."

For those who do not want to go to the trouble of making it, cold cream can be

The ripe berry itself may be rubbed on the face and arms with advantage if they will stand it without becoming stained.

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bought—and a very good one at that—and so can all the other toilet preparations, from almost any good chemist.

Upon the dressing-table there should be a supply of some acid fruit which suits the skin, and here one can tell better by experimenting than in any other way. There is a certain golf-girl whom I know who is always in the hot sun. She has tried lemon-juice upon her face with poor results, as it irritated her skin. So now she uses a ripe grape-fruit which seems, somehow, to take off the tan. She cuts it, rubs it on her face, leaves it on half-an-hour, washes it off, and then uses a good skin food.

I know another girl whose face, being dark in tone, becomes almost black when exposed to the sun. Moreover, it gets yellow in spots, breaking out in the most aggravating way. This girl finds that the juice of the ripe grape is very soothing to her skin. She breaks the grape on her face when she feels that she is tanned, and lets the juice dry on. Then she removes it with warm water, and uses an ordinary skin food. There are skin foods and skin foods, and there are some that make the hair grow on the face. The important thing is to select something that will actually check the growth of hair, killing the roots and discouraging the growth of new hairs. A good skin food will keep hair from coming on the face.

Dark girls frequently find that the juice of the grape is very soothing to the skin. Break the grape on your face and let the juice dry on. Then remove it with warm water.

A touch of powder after facial treatment does no harm. The powder may be wiped off afterwards.

Very often the taking away of freckles and yellow spots is merely a matter of patience. Let us suppose your skin permits the use of lemon-juice; dilute it one half with water, and apply it to the skin. It should be put on with an indiarubber sponge, which is passed gently and slowly over the afflicted spots until they are really soaked with the lemon-juice. The acid is left on the skin an hour or so, and is then taken off with softened water made by throwing a handful of bran in a pint of boiling water. When cold, it is ready for use. The skin is then anointed with skin food, and, after it is dry, is lightly dusted with powder. The result will satisfy the most fastidious.

With a little ordinary care, no woman need allow her skin to suffer from sunburn, or the effects of sea-water and wind.

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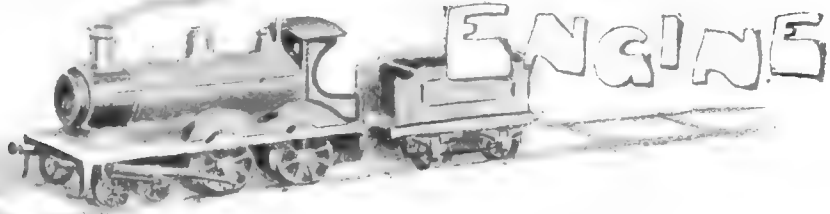
FATHER'S TOY ENGINE



A Story for Parents.

By George A. Best.

Father has written dozens of "stories for children," some of which are fairly decent, others so weak and impossible that I am really sorry for the reputation of the family when they appear in print—especially so as my Christian names are the same as those of the writer.

It is in order to correct any impression which may already have been formed by the reading public that certain tales which refer to talking frogs and love-sick fairies are written by me, that I have decided to publish a series of "Stories for Parents," each of which will be founded on fact and bear the stamp of truth in every line.

The weak point about children's stories is that they are usually read by nobody but grown-up people, and I am afraid that these contributions will contain far too many home truths to be relished by the readers to whom they are addressed. Young fellows of my own age will probably enjoy them, but I am anxious that they shall first be read by fathers of families (particularly by fathers of *male* families), so that the moral which each story contains shall not be wasted.

I am writing this long preface in order to explain the title of my contribution, for I realise that it might otherwise be regarded as a ridiculous one. Fathers are not supposed to buy toys for their own amusement, but, although the secret is closely guarded by the two heads of every household, it is a fact well known among the younger members, that any boy who is so unfortunate as to possess a mechanical toy is rarely allowed to handle the thing until it has been absolutely "worked to death" by his own father. It may be called "Charley's present," and "Charley" may be allowed to watch it, from a safe distance, while it is working, but the thing is really as much the property of Charley's father as is the table on which it stands!

Father's toy engine arrived on my thirteenth birthday. It was handed to me at breakfast time, and I was kindly allowed to unpack it from the box, and to read aloud the directions which the funnel contained. They were printed in three languages, and the "English" version was worded something like this:

> "To make for the capital working of this model it is good to observe that every parts is well oil and free from dirty. Fill with water the larger measure three times, and allow them to drop within the boiler. Then take of the smaller measure two fulls of spirit to saturate the lamp wicks beneath, and light it with much carefulness and presents of mind. When the steam emerge from the funnel, draw to rightwards the little lever and the model will went."

Father took the engine out of my hand and amused himself for a while by spinning each of the wheels in turn. He said that I could be building up the permanent way ready for a grand trial trip after breakfast. So I put the lines together, keeping an anxious eye on the engine while its owner filled the boiler from the hot water jug, and lit up the four wicks underneath.

"You must never play with your engine when I am away, George," he said, pushing

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the lever backwards and forwards as he spoke. "These things are all right in the hands of a competent man, but unless they are carefully handled an accident might very easily occur."

"Shall I go out of the room, then?" I asked pointedly.

The intentional sarcasm of my remark was quite lost on father. He replied that I could sit in the corner, well away from the circular track, and watch the engine as it flew round.

"You can learn a great deal about the mechanism of the locomotive by watching how I drive it," he concluded.

It was on the tip of my tongue to say that I should learn a great deal more by being allowed to do the driving myself. But I didn't wish to start the happy day by kicking up a row; and father seemed to be enjoying my birthday immensely!

The engine started suddenly, while I was pretending to read the morning paper, and father (who was the only excited person present) exclaimed "There she goes!" and went prancing round the track on his hands and knees in a most ridiculous way. When I asked him whether he was playing at "cow on the line," he replied that he was keeping an eye on the water gauge.

"If the boiler runs dry it will burst!" he panted after the seventh revolution. "We must shut off steam, George!"

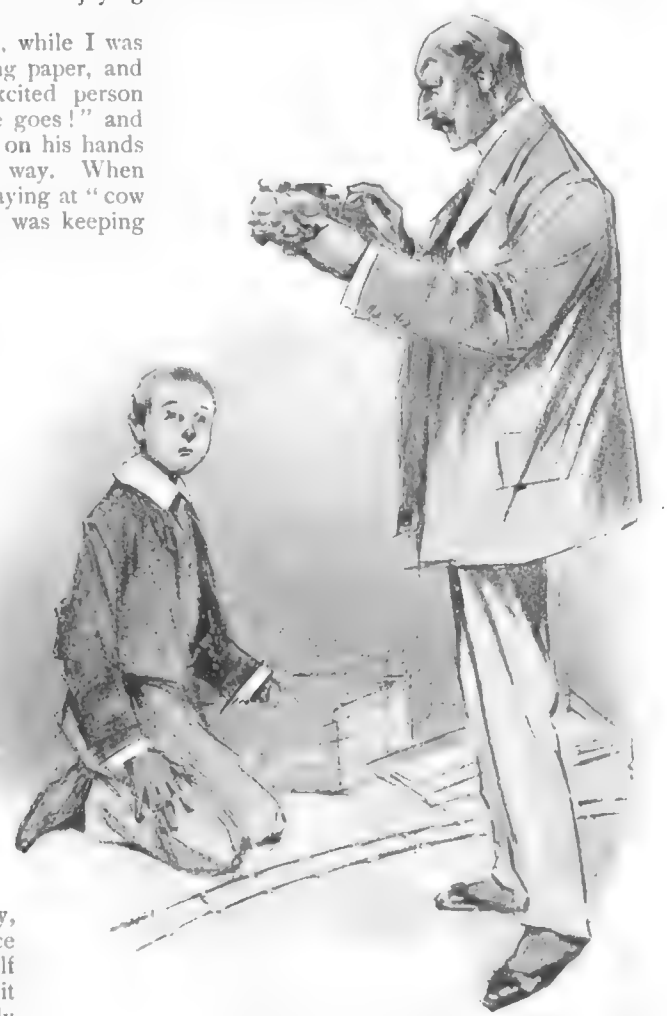
The thing was now flying over the tin sleepers at about ninety miles an hour, and father looked worried.

"How can you do that?" I asked unpleasantly. "If you have to catch the engine and hold it before you can draw back the lever, what is the use of having a lever at all? Hadn't I better put something on the metals to throw the engine off before the boiler bursts?"

The locomotive "jumped the points" at the chimney corner before father had time to reply, and made a bee line for the lace curtains. Dad threw himself down on his face and fielded it cleverly, but the boiler was nearly red hot, and he dropped it with a howl of anguish. After that experience he chased the engine round the room with a pair of tongs in his hand, but it was not until the ninth lap was completed that he managed to tent-peg it successfully. By that time the dining-room carpet was smoking in four places, and my new tin railway station had been trampled as flat as a dinner plate!

* * * * *

Charley Smith's birthday is on the 24th of June; mine falls two days later. Charley and I are very great friends, and his father and mine often spend an evening in one another's houses. Mr. Smith visited father on the evening of my birthday. I had been allowed to sit up late on that occasion, and had fallen asleep on the sofa. The entrance



"You must never play with your engine when I am away, George," he said.

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My friend's father was trying to blow out the furnace of the dying locomotive with a pair of bellows.

of Mr. Smith woke me up suddenly, although I did not allow father to see that I had been disturbed, in case I should be sent off to bed. I think dad forgot that I was in the room at all. They began to talk about the Education Bill, and that nearly sent me off to sleep again.

"By the way, have you had any experience of toy locomotives?" said father at length, abruptly changing the conversation.

I closed my eyes very tightly and listened hard.

"Oh, yes!" replied Mr. Smith with a very peculiar laugh. "I bought Charley a steam engine the day before yesterday."

"You don't allow him to play with it unless you are near by, of course?"

"Certainly not. Boys are far too careless to be trusted with that kind of thing. Charley enjoys the show from a safe distance."

"So does George. I gave him a working model to-day for a birthday present. It ran off the line and nearly set fire to the curtains."

"I had a somewhat similar experience with Charley's. But they're really very good fun and decidedly interesting."

Then father showed his engine to Mr. Smith, and they both spun the wheels round and played about with the various handles. I was just planning the details of a magnificent accident between Charley's engine and mine, when father said that he would very much like to see what the other one was like. Mr. Smith lives next door, and he at once volunteered to fetch Charley's model in for dad to see. And while Charley's father was away I heard a rattling noise, and, peeping cautiously between my half-closed eyelids, I saw dad hard at work platelaying.

"I thought we'd have a bit of fun with the two engines," he said when Mr. Smith returned; and Charley's pater replied that he was just about to suggest the same thing. They said that they could study the mechanism better without having an excited boy near by to hamper their movements and make silly suggestions. But I never saw two boys half so excited as they were! And although I don't like to speak disparagingly of my own

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father, I must say that the suggestions which he made to Mr. Smith from time to time were simply ridiculous.

When they had tried the capabilities of each engine in turn, timing the speed obtained with their stop watches, and working out the result by the rule of three (with the locomotive always in the third term), they both appeared to tire of watching the sport from a scientific standpoint, and father suggested that they should find out which of the engines was the stronger.

I knew perfectly well what was coming then, and I incautiously opened my eyes to their fullest extent. But both gentlemen were so much absorbed in the arrangement of a realistic collision (based upon scientific principles) that they paid no more attention to me than they did to the china cat on the mantelpiece.

It was only when the crash came, and I had yelled out "bravo!" as Mr. Smith's toy engine was knocked completely out of the ring by father's, that my presence was realised. Then they both looked pretty foolish, I assure you!

"Is that Charley's engine or yours, Mr. Smith?" I asked politely, as my friend's father was trying to blow out the furnace of the dying locomotive with a pair of bellows.

"Charley doesn't seem to care for it very much," he replied evasively. "It's a little beyond him."

"Mine is considerably beyond *me*," I said bitterly. "As a matter of fact it isn't mine at all!"

And dad, who had kicked the hearth-rug over the wreckage at the first alarm, said that I must get to bed at once as it was after ten o'clock. Then he turned suddenly to Mr. Smith, and said:

"Yes, I reckon that the Education Bill is as dead as a door nail!"

For obvious reasons, I thought it best to deliver my parting shot from the doorway.

"Speaking of the Education Bill," I said, "reminds me that the wheels of my engine are still spinning round at a great rate, and the hearth-rug is on fire in two places. I don't understand much in the way of politics, but those two facts have struck me very forcibly."

Then I went grinning to bed, and rehearsed "Napoleon watching the burning of Moscow" before the looking-glass, until father turned the gas off at the meter.

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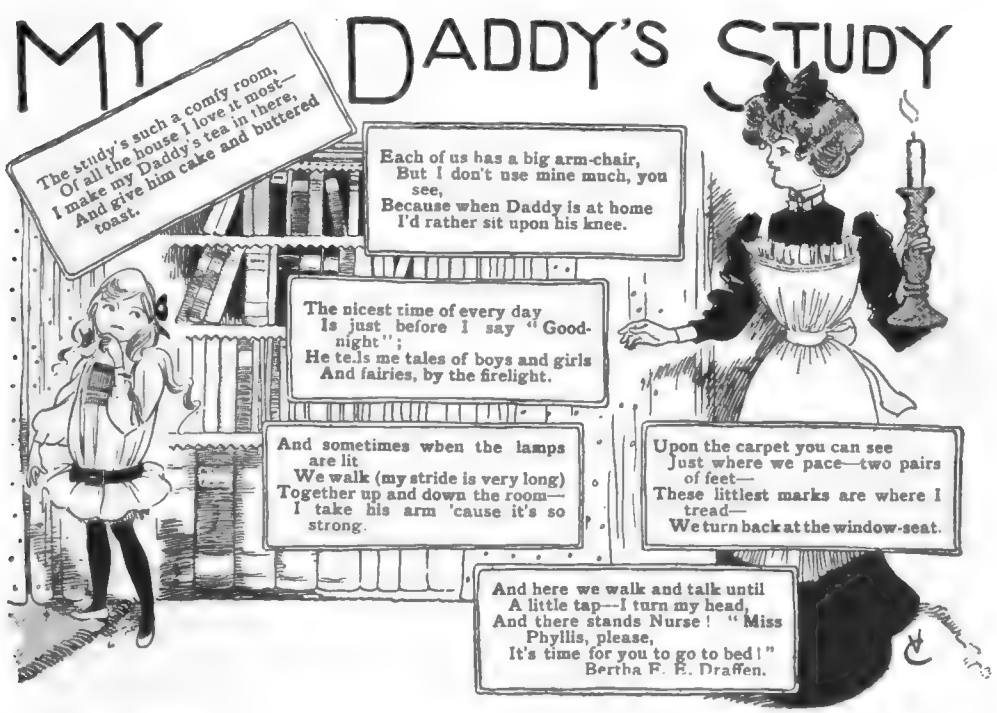
MY DADDY'S STUDY
The study's such a comfy room,
Of all the house I love it most—
I make my Daddy's tea in there,
And give him cake and buttered toast.
Each of us has a big arm-chair,
But I don't use mine much, you see,
Because when Daddy is at home
I'd rather sit upon his knee.
The nicest time of every day
Is just before I say "Good-night";
He tells me tales of boys and girls
And fairies, by the firelight.
And sometimes when the lamps are lit
We walk (my stride is very long)
Together up and down the room—
I take his arm 'cause it's so strong.
Upon the carpet you can see
Just where we pace—two pairs of feet—
These littlest marks are where I tread—
We turn back at the window-seat.
And here we walk and talk until
A little tap—I turn my head,
And there stands Nurse! "Miss Phyllis, please,
It's time for you to go to bed!"
Bertha E. E. Draffen.

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Picture Paragraphs.

The Editor Invites Readers to Submit Photographs Suitable for Use in These Pages.

Liberal Payment is Made for Accepted Pictures.

Photographs should be Accompanied by a Short Description.

Before drinking. Drinking. All gone!

THE FOREFATHERS OF THE ELEPHANT.

THE elephant's ancestors are well known to palæontologists through fossilised remains, and even frozen carcases, which have been found practically all over the world.

Indeed, the remains of these mammoths, or mastodons, are so plentiful in Siberia that there is a respectable trade in fossilised ivory.

The most complete skeletons of the best known species of mammoth have been obtained from the banks of the Hudson River, but great quantities of bones have come to light in the salty bog soil of the Big Bone Lick, Kentucky.

Mammoths have been found in the Arctic regions embedded in masses of ice, in such preservation that the flesh could be used as food for sledge dogs, and even human beings.

A mastodon head unearthed in America at a depth of 42ft. It is 4ft. long, 2ft. 4in. wide, and the tusks are 7ft. 6in. long.

A WELL-TRAINED CAT.

THIS is one of ten clever cats belonging to a lady who resides at Rivenhall, Essex.

Each cat is trained to perform different tricks, and the one in question will drink milk from a cup held in its forepaws with all the daintiness and grace usually displayed by "sweet seventeen" when enjoying a cup of tea.

The happiness of this comparison is enhanced when it is stated that the cat, having emptied the cup, will always wait to see if it can get a further supply!

There is a world of philosophy and experience in the cat's expression. It seems to wish the observer to understand that nothing which may ever happen can cause it any surprise; that it lost its illusions with its kittenhood, and that milk is the only thing left to live for, whether imbibed from a cup or from the old-fashioned saucer.

This *blasé* air is not universal among trained animals, and most of them enjoy life thoroughly, taking great interest in the tricks they are able to perform.

Perhaps in the case of this cat the boredom comes from a surfeit of milk. If it performs all day long this is understandable.

It would be a fearful thing for the rest of one's days to offer nothing but a long vista of milk, and calculated to depress even a cat.

And yet, perhaps, after all, there are worse deaths than to die of milk!

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A WOODCUTTING INCIDENT.

The Unique Experience of an Australian.

Woodcutters frequently have narrow escapes from death when felling large trees, but such an extraordinary incident as the following is without parallel in the annals of forestry. On June 13th last Mr. A. Struck, of Quorn, a small town of about 1000 inhabitants, situated 250 miles north of Adelaide, decided to fell a large gum tree which grew on the outskirts of the place.

Having sawn it through to the bark, Mr. Struck was driving a stone into the aperture made by the saw, in order to serve as a wedge, when the whole tree broke away and fell to the ground.

Now comes the astonishing part of the affair. On reaching the earth, the tree rolled a short distance from the stump, and then, of its own accord, stood upright!

To say that Mr. Struck was astonished only faintly expresses the state of his feelings. He returned to Quorn, and, as the news spread, most of the residents and what visitors were present went out to look at the tree which had behaved in such an extraordinary fashion.

This tree is a gum tree, 74 feet high and 18 feet in girth, and grew near Quorn, a small town 250 miles north of Adelaide, South Australia——

The gum tree was 74 feet in height and 18 feet in circumference. It stood where it had sprung upright from noon on Wednesday till 2 p.m. on the following Friday, when the wind blew it down.

Many photographs were taken of the tree in its new position, and news of the phenomenon spread rapidly.

Mr. Struck himself became for a period quite a local celebrity. He will be noticed, with his favourite dog, on the right of the lower picture.

——Mr. A. Struck cut it nearly through, and drove in a stone as a wedge. The tree suddenly fell, and, as its branches touched the ground, rebounded into an upright position.

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A CUCUMBER PARROT.

Most people who have tried it will admit that gardening is full of surprises.

In spite of books on the subject, the suburban amateur has been known to raise a crop of onions where flowers should have been, and to accomplish other strange and unaccountable horticultural feats.

A certain Essex gentleman, Mr. O. H. Peecock, of Colchester, once planted some cucumbers.

The cucumbers duly arrived, but one of them bore a striking resemblance to a parrot. No one knows why this was so. Probably the bloom was accidentally injured before it was set; at any rate, as may be seen from the illustration, the vegetable might easily be mistaken for a small green parrot.

Never a year passes without some extraordinary vegetable freak or other coming to light, but this particular instance of Nature in a humorous mood is very striking.

There is a look of wisdom on the face of the "parrot" which is very apparent, and would do credit to many a person with a reputation for sapience.

Photo *W. Gill, Colchester.*

This is not a picture of a parrot, as it appears to be, but of a cucumber, grown in Essex.

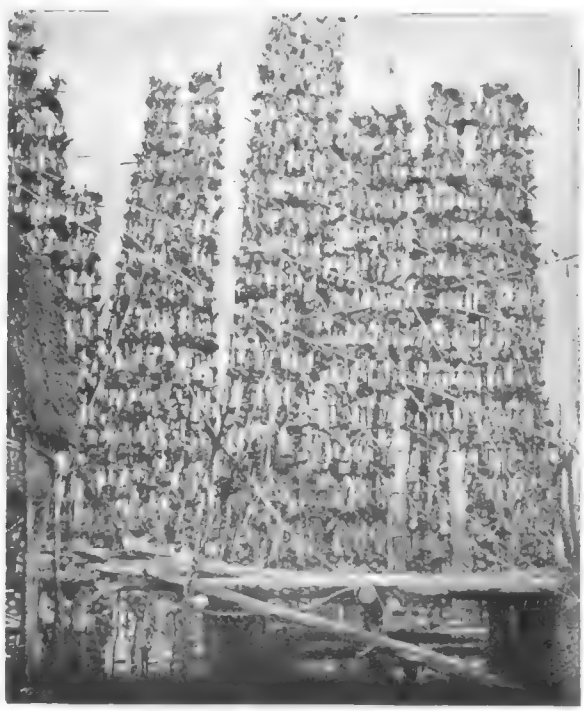

Photo *Oliver Bainbridge.*

Fierce gales strip the fruit from the trees in the islands of the Southern Seas at certain seasons. The natives, therefore, dry a reserve of fruit on frames such as those in the illustration, and keep it in case of need.

HOW FRUIT IS PRESERVED IN THE SOUTHERN SEAS.

Necessity is the mother of invention.

The beautiful islands of the Southern Seas are, at certain seasons, devastated by fierce gales, which strip every particle of fruit from the trees, and leave them as bare as Mother Hubbard's cupboard.

The local and immediate natives have learnt by sad experience to provide against contingencies of this kind, and so they preserve the fruit instead of leaving it on the trees at the mercy of the elements.

The method of preserving is to hang the fruit on strong frames in the open air.

Thanks to exposure and the action of sun and wind, the fruit becomes thoroughly dry.

When sufficiently "cured," it is removed from the frames, and taken to storehouses, where it is kept until needed for food.

These storehouses are strongly built in sheltered spots, so as to defy the most violent gales.

In this way the inhabitants of the islands manage perpetually to keep the wolf from the door.

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THE "WONDER-SHUTTER."

A Clever Invention.

Although people of an irascible temperament frequently threaten to knock a fellow creature's head off, it is an action which, happily, is seldom performed.

Apparently, however, a photographer has at some time or other managed to be on the spot when a man was knocking his own head off in a fit of pique, or how could the adjacent photograph have been obtained?

As a matter of fact, the picture was made with the help of the "wonder-shutter," an invention recently patented by Mr. W. Henderson, of Westbourne Grove.

It consists of a screen of fine black cloth, having a series of variously-shaped holes cut out of it, moving on a roller worked by a milled screw.

The screen is placed in the camera, when required, just in front of the focussing glass, the roller being turned until the first hole in the cloth is in proper position for the first exposure of the plate, which is then inserted as usual, and the lens cap removed.

A remarkable photograph obtained by means of the "wonder-shutter."

The natural result is that only a portion of the plate has been exposed. The screen is now rolled until the second hole appears, and the sitter is again taken, in another position if desired. This process is continued until the plate has been exposed all over, when it may be developed, with unique results. Most types of camera may be fitted with this apparatus, which brings freak photography within easy reach of every amateur.

To the uninitiated the results obtainable with it can only be described as marvellous, and there is this great advantage to be taken into account, they are no more trouble to achieve than is an ordinary photograph.

This, to busy people, is a consideration.

Another extraordinary photograph. It will be noticed that this "group" is composed of one man only.

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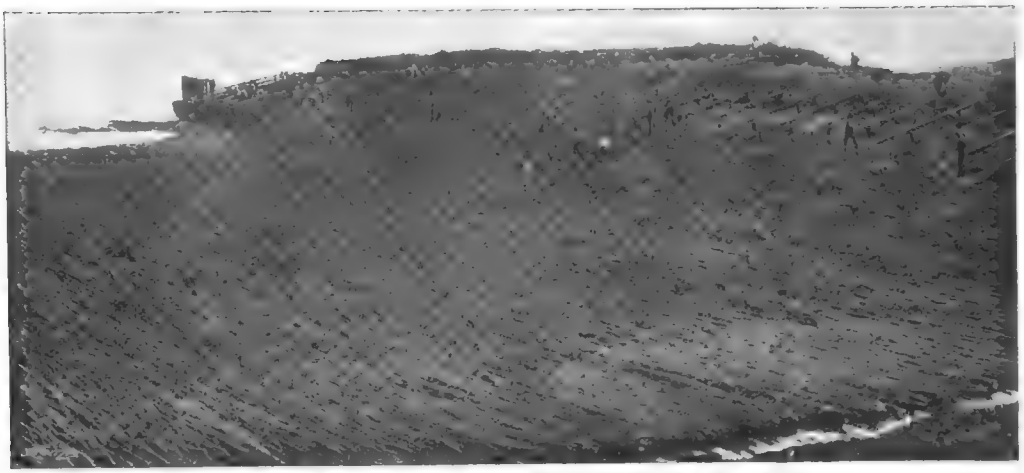

The currents of the Mississippi cause its banks to be undermined. To prevent this, huge mattresses made of willow and cable wicker-work are sunk in the river. This is a mattress in course of construction.

BRIDLING THE MISSISSIPPI.

How Floods are Prevented.

The Mississippi is a most erratic river, and periodically bursts its banks, flooding thousands of square miles of country. During the dry season the water recedes, and exposes the sandy banks to the sun. Then, when the heavy rains cause a rapid rise of the river, these banks are disintegrated, and give way.

The undermining of the banks is largely brought about by the swirling currents of the river, and the United States War Department is at present actively engaged in preventing this from taking place.

The continual erosion is overcome by constructing enormous mattresses of willow and cable wicker-work, which are ballasted and then sunk into the muddy bed of the river. They effectively resist the undermining currents. A mattress recently sunk at Memphis City measured 775 feet by 254 feet, and cost £3000. These mattresses are made of willow poles and wire cables strongly clipped together.

Steel cables, moored to barges at each end, form the foundation, on which are placed willow boughs. The whole is bound together with thick wire, and at intervals of ten feet strong clips are inserted. These clips divide the whole into 10-foot sections, so that if one breaks the others are firmly held.

A completed mattress, about to be sunk. Very careful adjustment of ballast is necessary to make it lie quite flat on the bed of the river.

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Real Life Romances.

The Editor is Always Glad to Purchase Real Life Romances from Readers. All Stories Must be True, Fully Authenticated, and Five Hundred Words in Length.

My Mother's Potatoes.

AN INDIAN ROMANCE.

SOME years ago, when my father's regiment was on the march in India—he was the adjutant of the regiment—my mother was far from strong.

"I wish I could get you something," he said one day; "something that would tempt your appetite."

"Oh," she said, "if you could only get me some English potatoes!"

"I'll try," he replied.

About then the regimental pay was coming down, and at the same time a small case of English potatoes came down too. The boxes were identical in appearance and both very heavy: small, strong, iron-bound chests; and when the bearers brought them in, my father had the one containing the regimental money placed in his tent by the head of his bed. The box of potatoes was further off, near the side of the tent.

The sergeant-major came running up to ask what was the matter.

The bearers who brought in the boxes and put them in place exchanged glances which made my mother very nervous.

That night my mother woke just in time to see two dusky figures, carrying the money-chest, steal silently out of the tent.

In vain she tried to wake my father; and his native groom, who slept rolled up in a blanket across the door of the tent, was also in a deep stupor.

Knowing that my father was responsible for the money, my mother ran out into the moonlight crying: "Thieves! Thieves! 'Turn out, —th Dragoons!"

There was immediately a rattle of accoutrements, and my mother, barefooted and in her night-dress, had just time to get back to her tent, when the sergeant-major came running up to ask what was the matter.

She told him hastily, and added that she could not wake either my father or the *sais* (groom).

Immediately our men were in hot pursuit, and by the time my father and the poor groom were recovering from the stupefying effects of the drug the Hindu thieves had used, our men returned, bringing the precious box intact with them. The thieves, finding themselves hotly pursued, had dropped the box and escaped.

When all was quiet again my mother thought my father was still suffering from the effects of the stuff he had inhaled, for he simply sat on the side of the bed and chuckled.

"Oh, John! are you ill? What is the matter?" she asked anxiously.

"I'm all right!" he said at last; "but oh, Emily, just fancy turning out the whole regiment to fetch back your potatoes!"

"My potatoes!" she gasped faintly; "but, John, it was the box from beside your bed."

"Yes, my dear girl! I also saw the glances that alarmed you, and as soon as I was alone, changed the places of the boxes."

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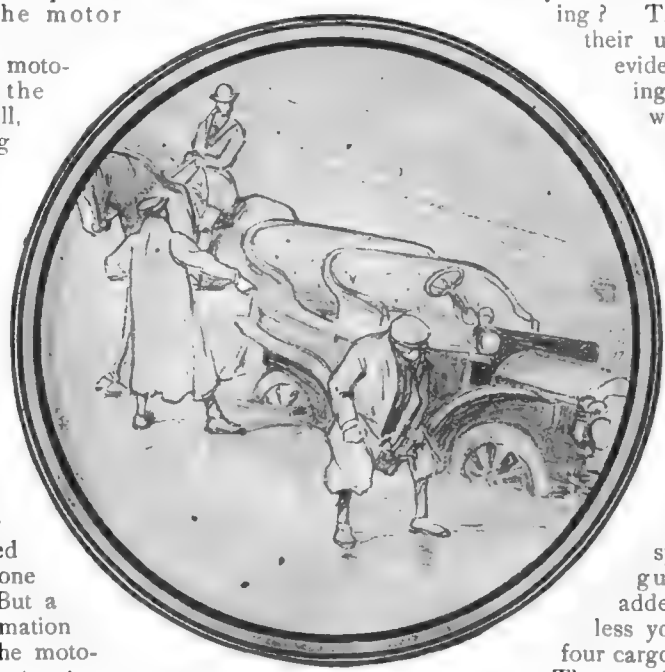
In a Quick-Sand.

THE STRANGE ADVENTURE OF A MOTOR-CAR.

PROBABLY there would be no story to tell had it not been that the sand, smooth and level from its recent wash by the tide, attracted the attention of two motorists from London, who were moving slowly along the sea-front of Filey in their car. Forthwith, unable to resist the temptation of so delightful a course, the car was turned to the beach, and soon was gliding, so it seemed, over the most ideal beach imaginable.

The sand was as hard and firm as a well-made road, and the owner of the car beamed with delight as he put on full speed and the motor whizzed along.

Presently the motorists brought the car to a standstill, and one taking up a camera, together they walked to the water's edge. They were not away more than two minutes. But in that small space something was happening. To the casual observer the car appeared to have undergone no change. But a sudden exclamation from one of the motorists, and the hasty return of both men to the car, told a very different tale. The wheels had sunk nearly a foot into the sand.



A man galloped up on horseback. To him the motorists explained their plight.

Now the engines were whirring and thumping. Still the car did not move. Now one of the men leapt out and endeavoured to give the car a helping hand. All to no purpose. The car moved neither forwards nor backwards. But steadily and surely it sank downwards in the quick-sand.

The motorists glanced anxiously at one another. Was their holiday going to cost them the motor-car? It looked uncommonly likely that such would be the case. The axles of all four wheels had now disappeared. Still worse, the tide was fast advancing on them.

A man galloped up on horseback. To him the motorists explained their plight. Away in the distance they could see the fish landing-stage, with horses and carts drawn up, and men unloading a smack. Towards this landing-stage the horseman made at full gallop.

With anxious eyes the motorists followed his course. Three-parts of each wheel were now embedded in the ever-yielding sand.

Why was the horseman delaying? They could see their unknown friend evidently expostulating with the men, who now and then stopped in the midst of their work to reply. Then they saw him wheel about his horse and return full speed to them.

"They won't come," he shouted, reining up some yards from them, and speaking with disgust. Then he added: "That is unless you agree to buy four cargoes of their fish." The motorists gazed blankly each into the other's face. Four cargoes of fish! Of what use was fish to them? But the closely creeping tide gave them a greater appreciation of the value of those fish.

They accepted the bargain, and soon the carts, with long ropes attached, and aided by a couple of motor-cars that had gallantly come to the rescue of a fellow in distress, were all straining to release the imprisoned car. Ten minutes later the car was drawn into safety. And then, such is Fate, the two unfortunate motorists suddenly decided to become fish-salesmen. And fish were cheap in Filey on that Easter Monday.

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The Midnight Tragedy.

A STRANGE ALARM IN AN OLD YORKSHIRE HOUSE.

THE following story was told to the writer. The narrator refused to divulge any names, nor would he give further explanation than that the affair occurred in an old Yorkshire house.

It happened some few years ago. One of the guests during one week towards the latter part of September was a girl of some eighteen years.

As is ever the case in old houses where long passages exist, dark with oak, and rooms gloomy in sombre panelling, the thought of ghosts was not long in creeping over the girl's mind.

In the daytime, with the light filtering through the small, rain-marked diamond panes, the long passages were eerie enough to cause the girl to hasten when she passed down them alone. But at night, when the old house lay sleeping and the dim glow of a night-light lit up the large panelled bedroom, the girl would suddenly awake with a consciousness that heavy footsteps had paced up and down the passages.

Suddenly a loud report like the sound of a pistol . . . caused the girl to spring up trembling in her bed.

Were these the footsteps of the old Royalist, worn and discomfited from the rout of Marston Moor? Such was one of the legends that had been told to her. And there were many more besides.

Then thoughts of secret passages would creep discomfitingly into the girl's fears. And it would be with a feeling of relief that she would open her eyes to find the sun shining on the heavily leaded window-panes.

But one night, towards the end of her visit, unable to sleep, the girl lay reading by the light of a candle. Somehow the gloominess of the room oppressed her more than usual this night. The house seemed strangely silent.

Suddenly a loud report, like the sound of a pistol fired close at hand, caused the girl to spring up trembling in her bed. It was succeeded almost instantly by a smashing of glass. Then another report, equally acute, followed. The girl's eyes were rooted on the wainscotting opposite. For the first time she perceived that there was a door let into the oak-panelling.

From beneath it a dark red fluid slowly trickled, forming itself into a horrible pool on the carpet.

At the sight the girl uttered a piercing shriek, and with loud cries of "Murder," flung open the bedroom door and sought refuge down the passage.

In a few minutes the whole house was aroused. Guests, host, and servants all crowded round the terrified girl, and listened to the story gasped out between hysterical sobs.

Led by their host the men portion of the guests advanced into the room. The sight of the now big crimson pool caused them to halt abruptly. Had, indeed, some terrible tragedy occurred behind that door?

"No, no, you needn't have any fear, sir," said a voice just then; and the corpulent figure of the cook, shrouded in a huge cloak, pushed its way to the front and boldly flung open the cupboard.

"To be sure," she exclaimed. "It's just as I thought. That there raspberry wine, which I bottled three days ago and stored in there 'cause I didn't know where to put it to be out of the way, has bursted two bottles to bits. Tell the poor young lady, sir, there ain't no murder been committed. It's only raspberry wine that's on the floor."

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The Man who was Curious.

A ROMANCE OF THE SECRET SERVICE.

THE following story shows the extraordinary simplicity of some people.

A certain little Belgian happened to meet an alert-looking stranger in a *café* in Brussels.

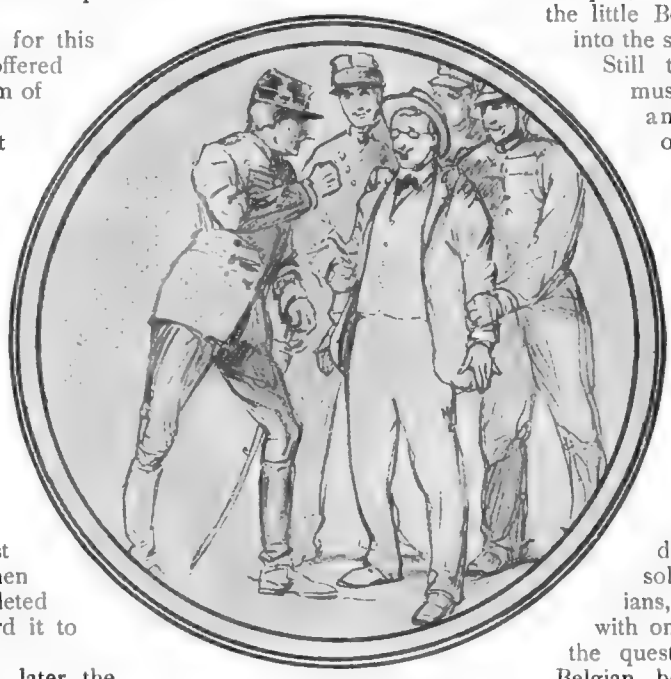
One day the stranger, who had drawn from the simple Belgian what his occupation was and many things besides, made a proposal that nearly overwhelmed the little man with its simplicity and the prospects it afforded.

"You must go to Amiens," said the stranger, "and there you must spend half-an-hour each day asking soldiers and anyone else who may turn up a few questions."

In exchange for this the stranger offered a very large sum of money.

"But what are the questions, sir?" queried the other.

"You will find them in this envelope, all printed," explained the alert stranger. "After each there is a blank space. This you must fill up, and when you have completed the list, forward it to me here."



An officer . . . shook a clenched fist in his face.

A few days later the little Belgian, his pockets well filled with money and notes, arrived at Amiens. During the journey he had occupied the time in studying the questions his generous friend had intrusted to him. Everything seemed so simple, and, too, the work was immensely profitable.

"You will have to be a little cautious," the alert stranger had said. But why? the little Belgian mused. There were many soldiers. The town was full of them. Surely some of them would be civil enough to answer his questions?

"*Mon ami,*" he began—this to a gunner—"how many men have you in the garrison?"

The gunner stared at the little man in mute amazement. On the other hand the little Belgian marvelled that this, the first question of the series, should have created so much surprise. However, deeming that he had put the query with too much suddenness, he invited another soldier standing near by to drink with him. Then he began:

"*Mon ami,* tell me what regiments you have stationed at the garrison?" At this the soldier put down his glass and swore.

Thereupon, much disconcerted, the little Belgian hastened into the street.

Still the questions must be answered, and, conscious of his duty, he stopped a civilian, thinking to find more politeness than from the soldiers. Even here success was not forthcoming, and after half-an-hour, during which time he had stopped a dozen or more soldiers and civilians, plying each with one or another of the questions, the little Belgian began to realise that his task was not so easy as he had at first imagined.

Moreover, strangely, he began to realise that he was being eyed with suspicion on every side. Suddenly he felt himself seized by either arm. An officer—but the little Belgian was too confused to realise his rank—shook a clenched fist in his face.

The little Belgian turned cold with horror.

He saw why the alert stranger in Brussels had offered him such a tempting sum for seemingly so small a reward. He was a spy, of this there could be no doubt, and as such, although the tool of another man, he would have to bear the penalty.

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A BLOW.

SHE: "As we are going to be married in December, don't you think you ought to begin to economise?"

HE: "Oh, I've begun already. That very thought occurred to me this evening as I was coming here."

SHE: "What did you do?"

HE: "Passed the sweet-shop without stopping."

* * * * *

NOT TO BE COMPARED.

He sat by the study fire
Never dreaming aught of harm,
When his wife rushed in exclaiming
In wild accents of alarm:
"Quick, John, run for the doctor!
Don't stand gaping like a fool!
Our precious baby's swallowed
Half a skein of Berlin wool!"

"Dear me!" said he, "How stupid
Of you to scare me so
About a little thing like that!
You really ought to know
That skeins of wool and such things
Are merely trifles to
The yarns she'll have to swallow
When she's grown as big as you!"

Stuart Furniss.

* * * * *

A SLIGHT ERROR.

YOUNG ARCHITECT (enthusiastically): "Why, when you get into the new house, you won't know yourselves."

MISS NURICH: "Excuse me, it will be other people we won't know."

CIRCUMSTANTIAL EVIDENCE.

"Papa," said a little boy to his father, "are not sailors very, very small men?"

"No, my boy," answered his father. "Pray, what leads you to suppose that they are so small?"

"Because," answered the young idea smartly, "I read the other day of a sailor going to sleep in his watch."

* * * * *

A CONVENIENCE.

FIRST TRAVELLER: "Does your daughter speak the language?"

SECOND TRAVELLER: "Not to any extent. She can say 'yes' though in five of them, in case any foreign nobleman should ask her to marry him."

* * * * *

HARD LINES.

WOMAN: "You seem to be a strong, healthy man. Can't you get a living?"

MAN: "No, mum. I hain't had no means of support since last Christmas."

WOMAN: "Were you thrown out of work?"

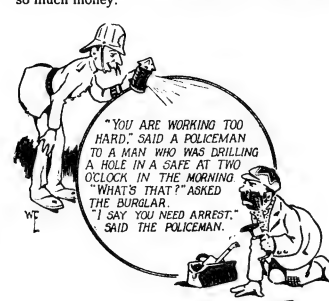
MAN: "No, mum; but my wife broke her arm, and she's not been able to do a week's washing since."

* * * * *

A TRUE SAYING.

FEATHERSTONE: "Well, old man, I am glad to hear that you are engaged to be married. Falling in love brings out qualities in a man that he never suspected."

RINGWAY: "I agree with you. I never knew before (sadly) that I had the capacity for spending so much money."


"YOU ARE WORKING TOO HARD," SAID A POLICEMAN TO A MAN WHO WAS DRILLING A HOLE IN A SAFE AT TWO O'CLOCK IN THE MORNING
"WHAT'S THAT?" ASKED THE BURGLAR.
"I SAY YOU NEED ARREST," SAID THE POLICEMAN.
WL

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A farmer had ten shillings awarded to him for being butted over a fence by his neighbour's bull. The smallness of the sum is due to the plaintiff's avowal that he was trying to get over the fence as quickly as possible, so that the bull only helped him in carrying out an intention conceived of his own free will.

PETTICOAT GOVERNMENT.

WIFE: "My dear, what is the subject of to-morrow's sermon?"

MINISTER: "The Frivolities of Modern Dress."

WIFE: "You must postpone it. I want to wear my new gown to-morrow for the first time."

* * * * *

BEYOND THE DREAMS OF AVARICE.

"I'd like to be rich," said Tommy.

"How rich?" asked his sister.

"Oh," replied the young man, after some thought, "rich enough to wear my Sunday clothes every day."

* * *

EARLY LOGIC.

LITTLE GIRL: "W'en your feets is cold you mus' put zem in cold, awful cold water—mamma says so."

LITTLE BOY: "What good does that do?"

LITTLE GIRL: "I don't know, but I s'pects it makes us think our feets wasn't so cold as we thought they was."

* * * * *

COMPATIBILITY OF TASTES.

HE: "I am very fond of you."

SHE: "How well our tastes agree."

HE: "What, are you fond of me?"

SHE: "Oh, no. Of myself."

* * * * *

ETIQUETTE FOR MEN.

Do not step on a train when in motion. It is dangerous even in a ballroom.

TOO MEAN FOR WORDS.

"He's an awful miser. I never heard of his giving away anything in his life."

"Didn't he give his daughter away when she was married?"

"His daughter eloped."

* * * * *

TO THE POINT.

HE (falling on his knees): "Oh, Mary, may I address you on the subject of marriage?"

SHE: "You may if you dress me after marriage."

* * * * *

A ROUNDEL OF LOVERS' SHOPPING.

"A little dear! A perfect pet!"
Cried she whom most my thoughts revere.
"Just see—that brooch with rubies set!
A little dear!

"You know the date! My birthday's near;
And you have bought me nothing yet!
Oh, happy chance that brought us here!"

The fond appeal no answer met,
For, much to Celia's grief I fear,
I, too, thought fifty guineas (net)
A little *dear!*

R. A. Hamblin.

* * * * *

BRUTALLY STUPID.

MISS DE VERE: "Ours is a very old family, Mr. Bloo."

MR. BLOO: "So I perceive. Have you no brothers or sisters younger than yourself?"

* * * * *

BUSINESS LIKE.

FATHER (trying a would-be son-in-law): "Young man, will you be able to take care of my daughter in the style to which she has always been accustomed?"

YOUNG MAN: "I'll guarantee it, sir, or return the girl. Come, is it a bargain?"

FULL OF ABILITY.

***Father:* "I would like my son to study under you."**

***D'Auber:* "Has he shown any natural talents that would fit him to become an artist?"**

***Father* (enthusiastically): "Yes, indeed. Why, he can go nearly a week without food."**

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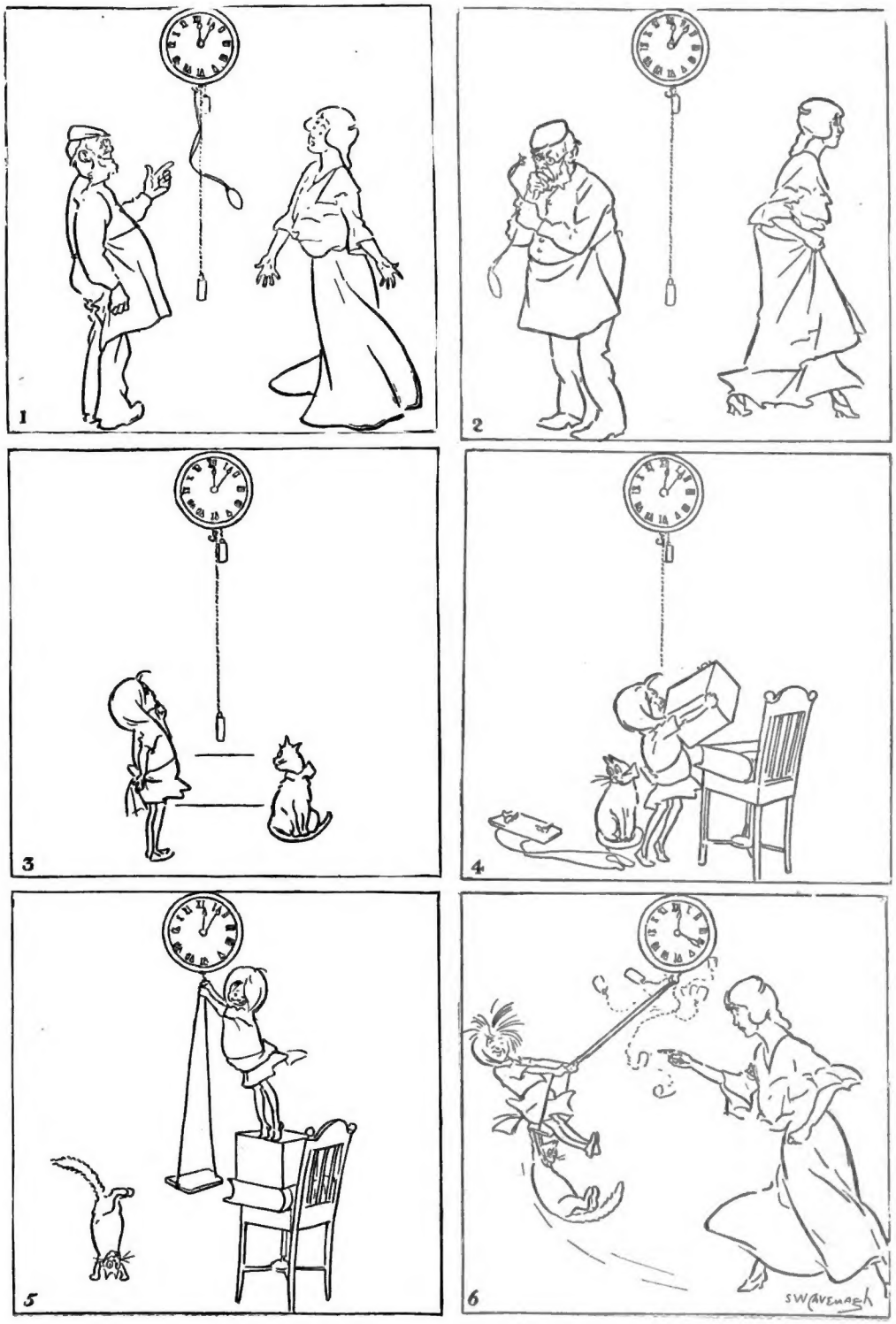
SET THE CLOCK GOING—A STORY WITHOUT WORDS.



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A SMART LAD.

UNCLE: "Now, what would you say if I gave you a shilling a piece?"

MASTER JACK: "I'd rather you gave mine to Sis, and told her to buy me a shilling cannon, as pa said the first money I got should go for that window I broke."

* *

QUITE SO.

People with plenty of money are not always well bred, but they are pretty well buttered.

* *

NOT FAIR.

Prancing up to his mother, a little boy said lately: "Ma, haven't I been good since I've been going to Sunday school?"

"Yes, my lamb," answered the mother fondly.

"And you trust me now, don't you, ma?"

"Yes, darling."

"Then," spoke up the little innocent, "what makes you keep the jam locked up in the cupboard the same as ever?"

* *

Boa Constrictor: "Let me embrace you?"
Miss Hare: "No, thanks, I've a pressing engagement elsewhere."

A PROBLEM.

It is hard to say which is the more helpless, the little baby, or the great, big man when he is asked to hold it.

* *

A BORN STRATEGIST.

MRS. F. (petulantly): "You never kiss me now."

MR. F.: "The idea of a woman of your age wanting to be kissed. One would think you were a young girl of eighteen."

MRS. F. (sharply): "What do you know about young girls of eighteen?"

MR. F. (with great presence of mind): "Why, my dear, weren't you eighteen once yourself?"

* *

PROOF WANTED.

SWEET GIRL: "Is your love for me absolutely unselfish?"

ADORER: "Absolutely."

SWEET GIRL: "Then I wish you'd go somewhere else to-night. Jack Hansom promised to call."

*

NOT A MAN OF IDEAS.

EDITOR (sternly): "What do you mean by heading the item, 'A Slight Mishap on the Tramway'?"

ASSISTANT: "Why, the man wasn't hurt."

EDITOR: "Never mind, sir; head it 'Under the Juggernaut's Wheels.' I'm afraid you'll never do for the newspaper business."

* * *

COULD SHE SAY MORE?

JENNIE: "I'm sure he loves me."

JESSIE: "How can you tell?"

JENNIE: "He caught me with my hair done up in curl papers one evening, and he still keeps on coming."

NOTHING—NOTHING AT ALL.

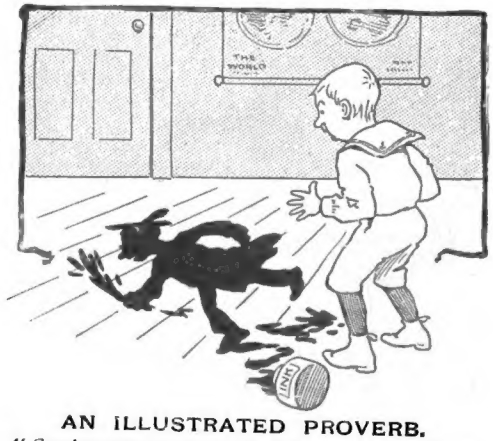
TUBBS (recounting his experience at a musical party a few evenings previously): "They did not even ask me to sing."

MISS WHITELYE (placidly): "You've sung there before, haven't you?"

"Yes, once. Why?"

"Oh, nothing."

* *



AN ILLUSTRATED PROVERB.

"Coming events cast their shadows before them."

WHY IT COSTS MORE.

DASHLEY: "Waiter, a bottle of port."

WAITER: "Yes, sir. Would you like very old port?"

DASHLEY: "Why? Is there very much difference?"

WAITER: "Oh, yes, sir. The old port has got cobwebs on the bottles."

[*CAP AND BELLS continued overleaf.*]

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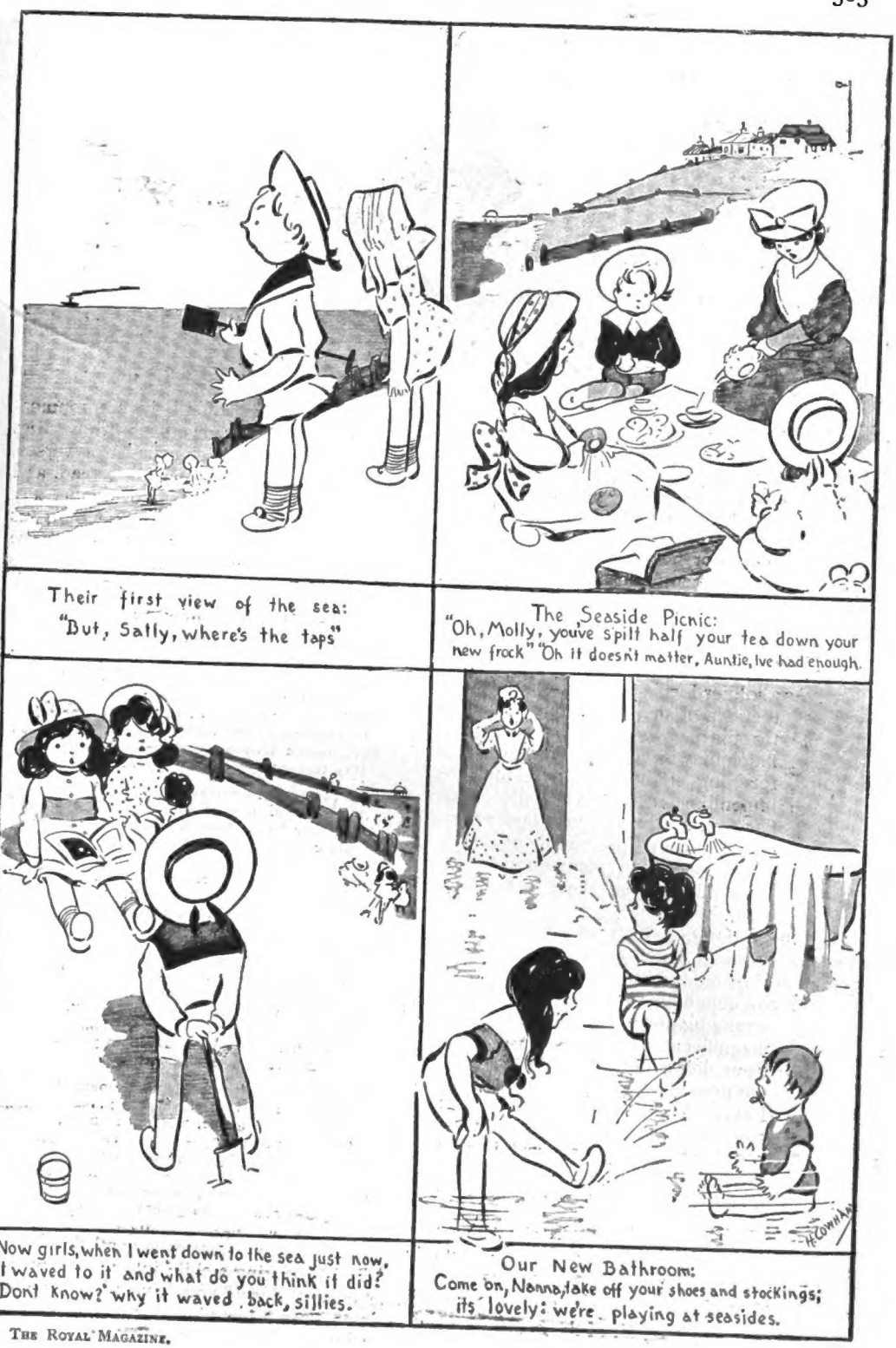
Their first view of the sea:
"But, Sally, where's the taps"
The Seaside Picnic:
"Oh, Molly, youve spilt half your tea down your new frock" "Oh it doesn't matter, Auntie, Ive had enough.
Now girls, when I went down to the sea just now, I waved to it and what do you think it did? Dont know? why it waved back, sillies.
Our New Bathroom:
Come on, Nanna, take off your shoes and stockings; its lovely: we're playing at seasides.
H. COWHAM

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MR. EDITOR —HIS PAGE.

FURTHER NEWS ABOUT THE F. A. F.

THERE are differences of opinion on almost any subject you can think of—except one. And that is the FRESH AIR FUND—that wonderful institution for sending children into the country for *ninepence* a head. I am certain that every reader of THE ROYAL, old or young, rich or poor, heartily sympathises with it, and prominent people in all walks of life are at one with you in this. Sir Ian Hamilton, to take a famous soldier, writes a most sympathetic letter. He says, among other things:

> "As a soldier I feel special sympathy with the idea of this fund, for I am sure that the man who would stand up unflinchingly to modern shrapnel-fire, retaining all his eagerness for the impending tussle with bullet and bayonet, must have breathed some fresh air in his childhood, and must have seen something better worth dying for than a London slum."

Our most famous man of business, Sir Thomas Lipton, writes as follows, and accompanies his letter with a fat cheque:

> "I am delighted to know that you are arranging for a continuance of the magnificent work which you have been doing during recent years for the poor children by means of your FRESH AIR FUND. I congratulate you most heartily on the success you have already achieved in this respect, and the enormous amount of good which you have been able to do. I know of no project which is better calculated to bring joy and happiness into the lives of the little children of the slums than that of giving them a day in the pure and health-giving air of the country.

But most charming of all the communications we have received comes from Miss Marie Corelli; who sends us a set of verses, which I very much want you all to read, as I am sure that their perusal will overcome any hesitation you may feel about sending us your subscription. The poem is by the late Charles Mackay, LL.D., Miss Corelli's adopted father.

PITY THE CHILDREN.

Pity the children of the poor,
Who've never pluck'd the daisies,
Who've never watched the skylark soar,
Or heard it singing praises;
Who've never trod the fresh green sward,
Or rambled by the river;
They need a holiday, ye rich—
May Heaven reward the giver!

Pity the little pattering feet,
That swarm in fetid alleys,
And grimy hands that might be sweet
'Mid cowslips of the valleys;
Pale lips that might turn rosy red
Where free, fresh breezes quiver;
Provide them holidays, ye rich,
And Heaven reward the giver!

Pity the little, bright blue eyes
That never saw the ocean,
Or gazed with innocent surprise
At wild waves in commotion;
Send, send them forth one happy day,
To hill, or sea, or river.
'Tis much to them—but small to you—
And God reward the giver!

From healthful joy comes wholesome thought,
And sense of Nature's beauty;
And mild instruction, wisdom fraught,
And piety and duty—
All withered in the noisome slums,
Deliver them—deliver—
'Twill cost you little, oh, ye rich!
And God reward the giver!

So remember, Ninepence is all the money required for taking a child into the country—ninepence! Surely you have ninepence, or, perhaps, even a few ninepences to spare?

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